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SPRING VOICES.

BY FRANK J. OTTARSON.

I heard beneath the thawing ground
The lightest whisper of a sound,
A faint, a tiny musical noise,
A sort of a half-created voice;
I leaned my ear, and distinctly heard,
Amid the humming, a single word—
I sometimes think I hear it yet—
And it sounded just like "Violet."

By chance I found a crevice near,
Broke by the winter atmosphere,
And there I listened, ear attent,
To learn what all this whispering meant.
I knew of voices in the air,
And voices round us everywhere,
But never before beneath the earth
Knew musical voices had their birth.

But this I heard: "Dear Violet,
The ground with warm Spring rain is wet;
I feel the cheering beams of the sun;
I'm sure that Winter is nearly gone."
"Yes, brother Crocus," Violet said,
"Last night I heard the mighty tread
Of Winter's chariot wheels go forth,
On their way to the frozen North;

"I heard the rain so merrily sing,
And knew 'twas only the steps of Spring.
To-day through the crevice I saw the sky,
'Twas blue and soft as an infant's eye.
The grub that has slept the winter out,
Coiled at my root, is stirring about;
Poor eyeless thing! could he only see,
Where two are happy there might be three."

"Now, Violet, we must soon prepare
For the glorious sun and the balmy air;
The envious clods are beginning to burst.
We mustn't be late—we were always first—
And Flora will scold at the least delay;
So let us be up and lead the way
For the long processions of lovely flowers
That march through Summer and Autumn hours."

Thus under the kind protecting mould,
Hidden away from the wintry cold,
These sweet little friends did chatter and talk,
And arrange all things for their first Spring walk.
Good people, take heed, or your careless tread
May crush the delicate Crocus' head,
Or ruin forever the beautiful hue
That timid Pansy is bringing to you.

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IDA OF ST. ILDEFONSO AND HER MAID-SERVANT FENELLA.

THE GRANADAN DUEL;

OR, THE

Castilian and the Moor.

A ROMANCE OF THE COURT OF THE ALHAMBRA.

By SYLVANUS COBB, Jr.

CHAPTER I.

THE ALARM IN CASTILE.

The time of our story is in the early part of the fifteenth century. A long line of Christian monarchs, wearing the crowns of the Asturias, of Leon, and of Castile, had beaten back the Moors until of all Spain only the province of Granada, washed by the waters of the Mediterranean in the far south, afforded a foothold and an abiding place to the followers of Mohammed. When Ferdinand III., in 1248, had completed the conquest of Cordova, thus adding that rich territory to his kingdom of Castile, the Moslem was allowed a season of rest from warfare with the Knights of the Cross, not because the Christians had lost their disposition to fight, but because they found plenty of fighting to do at home. The conquest of vast territories by the bold warriors of Leon and Castile had opened up a broad field for envy and dispute, and rival chieftains strove with each other for sole possession of that which had been won in a common cause. And thus it transpired that for full two centuries the Moor held his fair kingdom of Granada intact. And, more,—it came to pass that friendly relations not unfrequently sprang up between the two peoples. Christian knights went into Granada to join in the tournaments of the Court of the Alhambra, while the turbaned Moslem was free to visit the kingdoms of the Christian if he desired. This interchange of civilities, however, was not very evenly balanced. The Moslem found little inducement to visit his Christian neighbor, save on business, as, from the prevalence of feudal quarrel and intestine strife, the provinces of the north were not inviting to the stranger, and especially to one who might be regarded as an hereditary enemy; while, on the other hand, save as the result of personal quarrel, the Christian was as safe from harm in Granada as he could have been in his own realm; and hardly a tournament was given by the Granadan monarch in which Knights of the Cross did not freely participate.

Amid one of the grandest and most romantic scenes of the Guadarama mountains, upon the southern confine of Old Castile, stood the Castle of St. Ildefonso. Sir John, one of the strongest supporters of the throne of Leon and Castile under Henry II., who had strengthened and beautified the place, had passed away and left the estate to his daughter and only child, Ida. And the king, in answer to the request of his dying chieftain, had recognized the Lady Ida as Marchioness of St. Ildefonso, thus bestowing upon the maiden a dignity very near to the crown itself. But her coronet had not proved to be one of roses. Her realm was one of the richest in the kingdom, and bold adventurers were eager to despoil it, while more than one ambitious knight looked to sharing it with the fair owner. Thus far, however, the well-trained soldiers whom Sir John had left to guard and defend the domain had proved true to their trust, and the tempting estate had remained secure.

It was on a stormy, tempestuous day of mid-spring that Ida of St. Ildefonso sat alone in one of the retired chambers of her castle. She was nineteen years of age, and of the purest type of Castilian beauty. She was of just that height and mould which give best support to the superadded charms of true womanhood—tall enough and strong enough to command respect for her presence, without any of that bulk which sometimes serves to detract from maidenly grace. Her face, surpassingly fair in feature and in color, was as a well-spring of loveliness, reflecting upon its surface a truth and candor not to be doubted, while from the depths of her dark and lustrous eyes gleamed a light that won faith and trust at the first glance. Wondrously beautiful, and possessed of wealth and power, no marvel that ambitious men were eager for her hand. She was habited in a loose robe of crimson velvet, drawn in at the waist by a golden cord, and bound at the throat, and at the borders of the flowing sleeves, with fine ermine. The dark masses of her wavy hair floated unconfined over her shoulders, and the only ornament she wore was a cross of diamonds suspended about her neck by a chain of gold. It was not the common Latin cross of the Christian knights, but a Maltese cross with the arms crescent-shaped at their outer extremities. In certain lights, when the brilliant gems flashed with a bewildering lustre, it had more the appearance of four crescents suspended upon equal arms than that of a cross.

Ida sat by an open casement,—for though the storm spirit was abroad the air was not cold, and a broad coping above the embrasure protected her from the falling rain,—she sat thus, with her hands clasped upon her knees, gazing off upon a forest-clad spur of the mountain which arose beyond the stream that ran in that direction at the foot of the castle wall. A troubled look was upon her face, and ever and anon her hands were clutched as though with the pain of thoughts which she would crush if she could. A vivid flash of lightning, followed upon the instant by a burst of thunder that shook the old castle to its very foundations, caused her to move back from the window, and as she did so the arras at the far end of the apartment was lifted aside, and a woman entered—a woman past the prime of life, not handsome, but with a quiet dignity and grace that bespoke the lady of high degree. It was the Lady Octavia, sister of the deceased Sir John, and aunt to Ida. In fact, as Ida had lost her mother in early childhood, this aunt had been as a second mother, loving, kind and faithful; and since the death of the father she had given her undivided care to the welfare of her beautiful and ofttimes wayward niece.

Lady Octavia advanced, and touched Ida upon the shoulder.

"My child, why this moping fit? What interest find you in contemplating this havoc of storm?"

"My interest lies in the contemplation of other and greater havoc than this," replied Ida, without looking up.

"You are still fretfully occupying your mind with—"

"You need not hesitate, my dear aunt. I fear not to hear the name. You would have said—MANFRED."

"Aye, my child,—that was the name upon my lips."

Thus speaking Octavia seated herself by the maiden's side, and presently resumed:

"I wish, dear Ida, you could forget that man."

"And if I cannot?"

"It may be because you will not."

"And I may add that I have no desire so to do."

"Ida, will you listen to me?"

"Aye, most cheerfully, for I know right well that you love me, and would only seek my good."

"My child, your heart gives truth to your lips in that. Heaven knows if you had been my own child I could not have loved you better; and since your father died I have felt that I had indeed become to you as a parent. The last words I spoke to him gave to him the promise that I would be a mother to his child. And I have tried to perform my duty. And now comes a need of help and guidance far greater than any that has yet fallen upon my charge. Ida, your whole future is to take color from the decision of this hour. You are Marchioness of St. Ildefonso, and few women in all Spain outrank you. The King, who so kindly recognized your exalted rank, will certainly look to see you make a fitting choice in your husband."

"And is not the son and heir of Sir Gomez del Alcala amply fitted by his station for my mate?"

Octavia shook her head.

"Ida, we well know that Manfred is not the son of Sir Gomez; and as a younger brother of Sir Gomez is living, Manfred cannot be his heir."

Ida put forth her hand with an impatient gesture.

"My dear aunt, I beg you will not broach that matter now. Guy has already angered me exceedingly. I see not why he should have turned against Manfred. Manfred, I know, has been his very best friend."

"In this, my Ida, you give me opportunity for fuller speech. Your cousin Guy has not turned against his friend. His friendship for Manfred was never meant to absolve him from his brotherly duty to you. Remember that Guy, though only the son of your father's brother, has been more than a brother to you. Had he pressed his claim, backed as he might have been by the most powerful nobles of the land, he would surely have gained the title of St. Aldefonso. His great love for you held him back. If he has seemed to set himself against any claim of Manfred, be sure it has been entirely for your good. He has discovered something touching the birth of his friend which does not please him, and he only asks that that friend will not further press his suit?"

"What suit?"

"His suit to your hand."

"Sir Manfred del Alcala has never pressed such suit," said Ida, with strong emphasis. She reflected a moment, and then added, more softly,—

"Our love has been mutually confessed, and there the matter rests."

"O, my child," cried Octavia, with deep feeling, "if you could but transfer your love to your cousin!"

"To Guy?"

"Yes."

"But—my dear aunt—Guy does not love me."

"He does, with his whole heart."

"I cannot believe it. Had he done so he would have told me. That he loves me well I know; but not with the love he would give to a wife. Had he loved me thus he would not have calmly witnessed the growing intimacy of his friend. But—you speak of mystery in connection with Manfred's birth. Guy spoke of the same, but he gave me no light. Can you inform me?"

"Only this, Ida: We have discovered that Manfred is not the son of Sir Gomez, though until very recently we had supposed that he was of noble birth. By some means Guy has learned that the Lady Morgiana, instead of being the child of a noble Castilian house, was a homeless, nameless wanderer. In the extremity of distress, with her child in her arms, she sought the shelter of Alcala. Her marvellous beauty won upon the heart of Sir Gomez, and he married her. That was a score of years ago, and Manfred is the child thus borne through mystery and want to the castle gate."

"So much did Guy tell to me," said Ida, with forced calmness. "But one thing you have omitted. It was not Morgiana's beauty of person alone that won upon the heart of Sir Gomez. It was the sum of every womanly grace and charm that can adorn the true wife."

"I cannot deny, my child, that the Lady Morgiana is a most excellent woman. And so we have most excellent women around us upon every hand; but excellence of character cannot give title to the hand of a Castilian princess."

"Enough! enough!" cried Ida, starting up from her seat. "Say no more now. Let me think."

"I could ask nothing more," responded Octavia, also rising. "And as you think, you will not forget that all I would do I would do in love for you."

"I will not forget," said Ida.

And upon that the Lady Octavia left the room.

A full hour passed after Ida was thus left alone, and during that time she manifested her uneasiness and anxiety in a variety of ways. At length, however, came a quick, light footfall upon the corridor, and directly a girl, enveloped in a dripping cloak and hood, entered the chamber. Throwing aside her wet garments she displayed a neat, trim figure, with a face bright and pretty. She was Ida's maid-servant, loving, faithful and true.

"How now, Fenella—have you been exposed to all this storm?"

"The storm has not hurt me, dear lady. My cloak was proof against the rain, and my vigorous strength supported me against the wind."

"Did you see the Lady Morgiana?"

"I did; and I found her plunged in deepest grief and anxiety. Her son is gone, and she knows not whither."

"And, Guy?—did you learn of him?"

"He is also gone."

"What more, Fenella? You have further intelligence. I see it in your face."

"Yes, lady, I have. I went forth to learn all that was to be learned, and I have not been idle. Pedro and Michael have gone with their masters, so I had but one source of information left, and I think I hit upon the source most reliable, after all. I sought old Hafed, and questioned him, and when I had told him of your anxiety he frankly told me what he knew. As you are aware, my lady, this Hafed came to Alcala with his mistress, and he has been with her ever since. He knew there had been difficulty between Guy and Manfred; and he confessed to me that some words which he had inadvertently let fall in Guy's hearing had first opened to your cousin's knowledge the mystery connected with Manfred's birth."

"There is mystery, then?"

"Yes; but I am satisfied that even Hafed himself cannot fully solve it. He declares, however, of his own knowledge, that Manfred was honorably born, and that his father was dead when his mother came this way. The trouble arose thus: Hafed having, by an unintentional slip of the tongue, let out something in Guy's hearing which would seem to imply that Manfred was not of pure Castilian blood, Guy demanded to know more; and Hafed refused to answer more. Guy persisted, and the old man respectfully, but firmly adhered to his first declaration. He would not deny that he knew more than he would tell, but he would tell no more. Upon this Guy waxed wroth, and sought Manfred."

"Mercy!" ejaculated Ida, turning pale, "what must have been the result? They are both brave; both proud and impulsive; both bold and headstrong; and if they met in anger—"

"Wait, my lady, and hear me through. There may be occasion for alarm, but not in that immediate direction. The young knights met, and Hafed is sure that high words passed between them. After that Manfred prepared his business for a long journey, and, accompanied by his esquire, set off toward the south. Sir Guy, also, made preparation at his castle of St. Mark for an absence of long duration, and went away with his henchman Pedro."

"And did he go in the same direction?"

"Yes."

"And does Hafed suspect their destination?"

"Aye. He thinks they have gone to Granada."

Ida started up and caught her maid by the arm.

"Fenella, since by the laws of Castile all private quarrels with deadly weapons are forbidden, within the realm, our Christian knights have gone to the domain of the Moor to settle dispute by arms. Thou knowest this?"

"I know it," said the girl, in a whisper.

"And Guy and Manfred have gone to Granada for that deadly purpose!"

"So I fear, my lady."

"It must not be,—it shall not be, if I can prevent it. I am the cause of the quarrel; be it mine to avert this direful calamity. I know those two knights well. If they come to mortal combat a death must be the result. Go you and bid Alonzo to come hither. I would see him at once."

Fenella departed upon her mission, and ere long Alonzo answered the summons of his mistress in person. He was a stout soldier, and captain of the castle guard.

"Alonzo, how would'st thou like to go into Granada?"

"Right well, my Lady," answered the old soldier, with a kindling eye.

"Then select six of thy best and most trusty men-at-arms; mount them well; prepare pack-horses; and make ready to set forth on the morrow to bear me company."

The captain bowed low, and promised that all necessary preparations should be made.

Not far distant from St. Ildefonso stood the stout Castle of Alcala, and in one of the daintily furnished chambers thereof stood the Lady Morgiana. She was a woman of middle-age—not more than forty—and of a beauty that was still the theme of rapturous comment among the brave knights who were admitted to the hospitalities of her board. There was an Orient tinge in the sweet oval face, and in the depths of her large dark eyes was a dreamy lustre which belonged not to the impetuous blood of Castile. She was robed in black, and a tiara of pearls gleamed in the rich masses of her raven hair. Her husband, Sir Gomez, one of the bravest of the Castilian knights, and Count of Alcala, had been dead several years, leaving her to the management of the estate.

As Morgiana thus stood, her foot impatiently beating upon the carpet, an old man entered her presence. He was of medium stature, strong and erect beneath his threescore years, and his face gave token of Moorish blood.

"Hafed," spoke the lady, "I have determined to set forth for Granada.—Stop! I will listen to no more of your opposition. Your mysterious hints—hints which you confess you cannot explain—move me not a thousandth part so much as do my fears for my son. You cannot deny that Manfred and Sir Guy of St. Mark have gone to Granada to settle a quarrel which they may not settle under the laws of Castile, and upon Castilian soil.—Speak."

"I cannot deny that the thing is probable, my lady."

"Then I shall set forth at once. If I can see my son before the hostile meeting takes place, the calamity may be averted. No more, Hafed, but go and prepare. For myself I fear no earthly danger. What have you to fear?"

"For myself, nothing."

"Then what should detain us?"

"Nothing beyond what I have already pointed out."

"Pshaw! *You have pointed out but vague and empty phantoms, creatures of your own overwrought imagination. I care not for them. We start on the morrow, as soon as the sunbeams gild the mountain tops. Let me not find you faithless in this last and greatest need.*"

The old man turned away very reluctantly, but he had no thought of disobedience.

CHAPTER II.

GUY AND MANFRED—THE AMULET.

The beams of the morning sun were glancing brightly down the Campillan valley as a traveller rode away from a small inn of Almadilla toward Granada. He was a young man, not more than four-and-twenty, and the silver spurs upon his heels, and the jewelled cross upon his breast, proclaimed him a Knight, and of noble family. In frame he was exceedingly strong and lithe, holding his seat in the saddle with grace, and betraying goodly layers of muscle upon his finely proportioned limbs. His garb was that of a Castilian cavalier of the period, and beneath his velvet surcoat appeared a close-fitting skirt of mail. That he was a Castilian gentleman not only his garb but his face gave token; and that face was a handsome one—a face frank and winning, and reflecting much strength of character. Such was the COUNT GUY OF ST. MARK.

Close behind the Count rode Pedro, his esquire—a stout, lusty fellow of thirty, or thereabouts, used to arms and to adventure—a man of ready wit and undoubted courage, whose chief delight and pride was in faithfully serving his noble young master. Beneath his light riding cloak he wore a breastplate of steel, and he had nicely adjusted steel plates upon his shoulders and upon his thighs.

A third horse followed in Pedro's wake bearing the packs containing change of clothing, and also bearing extra arms, for knight and man.

Shortly after Guy of St. Mark had ridden away another party emerged from the wayside inn. The first was a youth in knightly attire, whose garb bespoke him also of Castile. He was younger than Sir Guy, being not more than two-and-twenty, and his frame was not so heavy. But if he lacked in bulk he certainly made up the seeming deficiency in vital force and native dexterity. His supple limbs were furnished with thews like finely tempered steel, and the flash of his dark eye was not quicker than were the graceful motions of his perfectly balanced body. This youth, too, was handsome, and his face was winning and noble; but its beauty was different from that of the Knight of St. Mark. The tinge of his cheek was warmer; the light of his eye was far deeper and more intense; and when his features were at rest there was a dreaminess of expression—a soft, gentle voluptuousness verging almost upon effeminacy—which gave a peculiar charm to the quiet mood. And again, his difference of character from St. Mark was manifest in his garb. There was no effort at display, but he wore his ornaments because he loved them—because they administered to his admiration of the beautiful. His surcoat was of brilliant crimson velvet, heavily bordered with fine gold; his shirt of mail was of alternate links of steel and gold; the hilt of his sword was elaborately jewelled; and the brooch upon his velvet cap contained diamonds worth a prince's ransom. Such was SIR MANFRED DE ALCALA, son of the Lady Morgiana, and one whom Sir Gomez had in his lifetime delighted to love and to honor.

Manfred's esquire, Michael, was a tough old warrior, and bore the scars of many a hard conflict. He had given to the youth lessons in arms in other years, and now served him with will and heart, finding love and respect and duty all combined in his disposition toward his master.

This party was also accompanied by a pack-horse, showing that they were upon a journey which might be of some duration.

The sun came gradually up, and as the travellers at length mounted the southern acclivity of the valley the snow-clad summits of the Sierra Nevada appeared to view in the distance.

"Behold!" cried Michael, as the snowy peaks flashed upon the scene. "We approach our journey's end. Yonder are the sentinels that keep watch and ward over the famed city of the Moor."

"And, if I mistake not," said Manfred, "the city is not far away."

"Not half so far as are those mountains. If no accident befalls us we will eat our dinner in Granada."

"Better for me," pursued the Knight musingly, "had I known Granada before. There is a charm to me in this southern clime. Nature is more prodigal than amid the fastnesses of our northern mountains, and the very breath of heaven seems softer and more grateful. I envy the Moor his sunny home."

"Which plainly shows," suggested the esquire, "that the blood of the Moor courses in your veins."

Manfred started, and an exclamation of reproof was upon his lips. He restrained himself, however, and presently said,—

"I cannot deny it. My mother admits the fact."

"Nor are you ashamed of it, my lord?" [illegible]

"Ashamed of it!—By Heaven! No, [illegible] with [illegible] Guy taunted me a thousand [illegible]

being a Moor, I had not taken deadly offence; but when he dared to intimate that there was graver doubt—when he hinted at mystery of shame—he struck at the mother that bore me! Santiago! I am glad we are so near to the end."

"And yet," ventured Michael, "you do not forget your love for the man you have come hither to fight. As I live, I do not believe that Guy of St. Mark bears you a wish of harm."

"Nor do I bear ill toward him. But enough of this, Michael. I am free to confess that even now, smarting under memory of that cruel imputation, there is love enough in my bosom for Guy to unman me for the conflict were I to give it sway."

The esquire rode thoughtfully on, evidently reflecting upon the words which his master had spoken.

Half a mile in advance rode Sir Guy of St. Mark and Pedro. They, too, had caught sight of the peaks of the Sierras, and had determined that they were near to Granada. The Count was thoughtful even to sadness, and his head was bent low over his saddle-bow.

"How is it, my master?" demanded Pedro. "How like you this southern land?"

"Of a truth, Pedro, I think I prefer my own sterner clime in the North."

"Which proves that thou art a true Castilian," philosophized the esquire.

"As I am proud to be," added the master.

"Dost think Sir Manfred feels any such pride?"

"Not in Castile, I fear."

"Fear? How is that, Sir Guy? Dost fear on thine enemy's behalf?"

"Hush, Pedro. You mistake if you think I have enmity against Manfred. As God lives, I love him!"

"How?—Love him?"

"Yes."

"And have come all this way to fight him?"

"Because we could not fight in Castile. It is against the law."

"Aye,—I know the law; but I know not the law which calls upon a man to fight one whom he loves."

"Peace, good Pedro. It is as it is. The result is of my own inviting, and I must abide."

"But, as we were saying, my master,—it is evident that Manfred must feel a twinge of familiarity with the scenes which are so strange and uncongenial to you."

"How so?"

"Bother! Is it not true that the blood of the dusky Moor runs in his veins?"

"As it has run in the veins of some of the grandest men the world has seen," replied the Count.

Pedro looked up in astonishment.

"Santa Maria! And did you not forbid Sir Manfred to speak further with your fair cousin because of his Moorish taint?"

"No, good Pedro.—Hold! Let the matter drop where it is. Say no more. We must not enter Granada with a prejudice against Moorish blood. We will respect and esteem what is good and pure."

"And love what is beautiful," added Pedro.

"Yes," said Guy.

"And," pursued the esquire, "how if we find beautiful women? I have heard that some of the Granadan maidens are surpassingly fair."

"My heart is whole, Pedro."

"Just the worst kind of a heart to bring into such danger. By Our Lady! 'twould be a curious happening if the Count of St. Mark, who has withstood the glances of every bright eye in Castile, should surrender to the soft witchery of a Moslem maid!"

Guy smiled at the absurdity of the thought, and rode on without further remark.

Shortly after noon the travellers entered the city of Granada, and put up at comfortable inns, Guy finding lodgment on the street of St. Omar, beneath the roof of a worthy publican named Yezid, while Manfred found quarters with the publican Otello, on the adjacent street of Almanzor. The only restriction put upon strangers in Granada was, that they should lodge within prescribed limits; and, as may be supposed, these public-houses thus assigned were especially under the watchful eye of the royal guard.

When the day had passed, and the shades of evening had fallen upon the city, Guy of St. Mark called his esquire to him.

"Pedro, you know where Sir Manfred is lodged?"

"Yes, my lord."

"It is my desire to know if he will see me this evening."

"But, my lord, you are the challenged party. Should not the overture come from him?"

"I stand not upon such ceremony, Pedro. We are both challenged, and are both challengers. I am the oldest, and will make the advance. God knows the privilege is not a thankful one. I would see Manfred this evening if it is agreeable to him."

Without further remark Pedro departed upon his errand. He found Otello's inn, and also found Michael, to whom he communicated his errand.

"I will see my master," said the latter, "and learn his pleasure." He had taken two steps toward the door, when he stopped and turned.

"Pedro," he said, "if your master knew the heart of Sir Manfred he would not be so eager to push this thing."

"You mistake my master's motive," returned Pedro. "If he is in haste, it is only to be rid of a business that sits heavily upon him. It is your master who does not know the heart of Sir Guy."

"How is that, Pedro?"

"I will tell you how it is: Sir Guy swears that he both loves and honors your young lord; and when I would have spoken lightly of Sir Manfred's dusky cheek he stopped me with a frown and a reproof, and would have me to understand that he had room in his heart to love a Moor who was true and manly."

"Say ye so?" cried Michael, with kindling eye. "They are the very sentiments Sir Manfred expressed to me concerning Guy of St. Mark. Why should they fight?"

"Aye—why?" echoed Pedro.

"I know them well," pursued Michael. "They are both brave, and both gallant. We know what Sir Guy hath done in the field; and I can swear, of my own knowledge, that the stroke of Manfred, with sword or spear, is fearful. If they come together in the conflict of arms, one or both must die. After the first blow is stricken neither can retract."

"Perhaps," said Pedro, after a little reflection, "a knowledge of one another's real feelings may change their purpose. We will enlighten them."

"We will. I will give the word to Sir Manfred."

"And I to Sir Guy. And now go to your master with my errand."

Michael went and saw his master, and presently returned with word that Sir Manfred would be pleased to see Guy of St. Mark at the earliest opportunity.

With this answer Pedro returned to the inn of St. Omar, and shortly afterward Sir Guy was on his way to fulfil his appointment. He found Manfred alone in his chamber, and under the impulse of the old friendship he put forth his hand and smiled. Manfred returned the grasp and the smile, and there was no hypocrisy in his frank and handsome face.

They were a handsome pair, right noble and gallant both. Guy was a shade the tallest, and stout in proportion; but the beautiful symmetry of Manfred's lithe and comely form, and the strength that lurked in the slumbering fire of his dark and lustrous eyes, left no show of lack in manly vigor.

"Manfred," said Sir Guy, when they had seated themselves, "my good Pedro has deemed it necessary to inform me that you still hold me in your love. I needed not his assurance, for my love for you is so strong that I had already in my heart done you that justice. I think we understand one another on that point?"

"Pedro informed you truly, Sir Guy."

"And you believe that my love for you is not gone from [illegible]"

"[illegible] taken your hand with a [illegible]"

"Right, Manfred. And now to business. Here in Granada we are free to settle our dispute as we will. The law of the Castilian king against duelling does not reach us. Do you still press your challenge?"

"First," answered Manfred, "I press my demand for an explanation of the foul slur you have cast upon my birth."

"I have meant no wrong to you, Manfred. I have meant simple justice to my fair cousin. There is doubt—"

"Hush!" cried Manfred. "Do not repeat the story. Will you tell me whence you obtained it?"

"I cannot."

"Do you realize that the breath which deprives me of honor also falls darkly upon my mother?"

"I am sorry, Manfred."

"And you will not retract?"

"I cannot."

"And you will not tell me how you came by the story?"

"Neither can I do that."

"Then," said Manfred, arising from his seat, "our friendship must henceforth put on the guise of enmity. I have but one course to pursue. You leave but one course open to me. I must protect my own character; and a thousand times more must I protect the fame of my mother. I therefore demand of you answer at the sword's point!"

"So be it, Manfred. At the sword's point will I maintain the integrity of my house as represented in my fair cousin."

"Ah, Guy," said the Knight of Alcala, with a faint smile, and with an admonishing shake of the head, "your cause is weak, for you have not the prayers of the fair lady in whose name you would battle. Her heart's fondest love is with me."

Guy's brow darkened.

"So much the more need is there," he cried, stamping his foot upon the floor, "of my striking in defence of her honor."

"Her honor, Sir Guy?"

"Aye. We may speak words of naked truth now. You force me to it, Manfred. You know that the blood of Sir Gomez runs not in your veins?"

"I know it. I have learned it within the month."

"And can you tell me who was your father?"

"I think he was a Moor."

"Of what condition?"

"I know not."

"I have nothing more to ask," said Guy, with a wave of the hand.

"And I," retorted Manfred, hotly, "have nothing more to explain in empty words. My life has been honorable, and King John's own hand did knight me. My position is good and loyal, and with my sword I will maintain it."

"Enough, Sir Manfred. We have but to settle upon the time and place."

"Thou art the challenged party. Any time and any place will suit me."

"Then," said Guy, "let us have done with it as soon as possible. Did'st note an open glade by the river's bank, some three miles away, upon the edge of which a large oak had been uprooted as by a tornado?"

"Aye, I marked it well."

"Let us meet there on the morrow, when the sun is an hour high."

"So be it."

Guy had turned to depart when Manfred called him back.

"Sir Guy, I have a question to ask. Deem me not impertinent, and I will take thine answer, be it what it may, in good faith. Should I fall in the approaching conflict, and should'st thou come off alive and strong, will it be thine aim to win the love of Ida?"

"Not for my wife, Manfred. She would not so accept my love, nor is my heart so inclined. What might have been, had'st thou never come between us, I cannot say; but as it is, the future holds no such probability in store."

"I thank thee for thine answer, Guy. I shall strike with less bitterness for the knowing of this."

"And now," said Guy, "I have a question to ask of thee: Wilt thou walk abroad this evening?"

"The night is balmy and tempting. I had thought of it. Why do you ask?"

"Merely that I might give you a word of advice. Remember that we are in a strange city, and among a strange people. You may not realize how glaring is that jewel which you wear upon your bosom. Men have been slain in Castile for the winning of a bauble of far less price, and its intense gleaming may excite the cupidity of some man in Granada who would not hesitate to take a life for its possession."

"I will hide it," said Manfred, "but I will not remove it. My mother hung it about my neck, and told me it was a charm. I thank you for your hint all the same."

The jewel to which Guy had alluded was a five-pointed star which gleamed and flashed with the radiant light of a thousand stars combined. Its centre was a ruby of wondrous size and purity, of a fiery red color, flaming with a fervid glow as though from fires within its own mystic depths. The points of the star were formed of diamonds set in crusted gold, and they, catching and reflecting the beams of the ruby, scintillated with a hundred brilliant hues. The jewel was suspended about Manfred's neck by a chain of gold, and reached half way down the breast.

"It was your mother's?" said Guy thoughtfully.

"Yes. She gave it to me when she told me that I was the son of a husband who lived and loved her before she became the wife of Sir Gomez del Alcala. I hold it as doubly a talisman. My mother's hand bestowed it upon me, and I am sure my father wore it before I was born. Again I thank you for your caution."

Manfred lifted the glittering talisman and dropped it within the fold of his vest, and Guy, with a bow, turned away, muttering to himself as he went,—

"The man who could own that marvellous jewel could have been no common man—unless, indeed, he won it as a robber might win it now. Who knows?"

CHAPTER III.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE FOREST GLADE.

When Manfred had heard the last echo of Guy's retreating footsteps he bent his head in thought, and anon he paced to and fro across his chamber.

"I know not if I have been wise in this," he said, to himself. "Had I been in Guy's place, I might have done as he has done. This cloud upon my parentage grows darker with the wearing—"

"Then why not cast it off? Excuse me, my master, but I cannot bear to see you bowed beneath such a weight at such a time."

The knight turned and beheld his esquire.

"Ah, Michael, I would cast it off most gladly if I could."

"Why did you not demand to know the whole truth before you left Alcala?"

"Of whom?"

"Of your mother."

"My mother I dare not press; and yet I think she hath told me all she hath to tell. She hath feared not so much to tell me of my father as to confess her own ignorance. She married him when he was very young, and he died shortly after I was born. There was something painful in the manner of his death—something, I judge, mysterious. My mother can only hold my hands, and look into my face, and say to me that she firmly believes my father to have been an honest and upright man. More she will not say, and I think more she cannot say."

"Did she particularly assure you that he was an honest man?" asked the esquire.

"Aye,—she was earnest and emphatic upon that point."

Michael shrugged his shoulders, and was silent.

"How now, sirrah?" cried Manfred, catching the man's significant gesture. "What meaning hast thou in that silent shrug?"

"I can say only this, Sir Manfred,—and I speak not for myself alone: The jewel which you wear upon your neck is worth the ransom of an emperor. No ordinary man could ever have honestly possessed it. The ruby alone is by far the rarest gem in Spain. I have heard that such a bauble was once lost in Granada. If you are wise, my master, you will not let that wondrous star gleam upon Moorish eyes."

"By heaven! Michael, I cannot believe that any taint of wrong attaches to the possession of this jewel by my father. My mother, when she placed it about my neck, told me it was a sacred talisman; and I think my father told her the same. He told her to preserve it with religious reverence.—I will not believe it. I have no ground for distrusting my mother's word."

"Then why borrow trouble, master? As I said before,—throw off the cloud. Think no more of it. You have enough else to occupy your thoughts at present."

"You are right, Michael. I will take a stroll in the fresh air. I think the streets of Granada are safe."

"Safe enough for that. But I will follow in your steps."

"As you please."

Manfred buckled on his sword, and threw his light cloak over his shoulders, and went forth. A while he walked on in advance, but at length he stopped and allowed his esquire to come up with him.

"Michael, you are acquainted in Granada?"

"Somewhat."

"I would like to walk toward the Alhambra. Can you lead the way?"

"I can if the gates are open."

They moved on in the new direction, and finding the gates in question open, and no impediment offered to their passage, they passed through and began the ascent of the paved and terraced slopes leading to the royal palace. They had reached a point near to the wall of the outer court of the kingly residence when they stopped and turned to look back upon the city that lay at their feet. Upon their right hand was a grove of olive trees, and upon their left was an angle of the wall in which was an arch with a gate of brazen bars. As they stopped they heard voices upon the opposite side of the wall. Michael drew his master more closely under the shadow of the masonry, and intimated to him to be silent.

"We may as well avoid observation," he whispered.

He had no thought of listening to the voices in the court; but they reached his ear, nevertheless, and he could not but hear.

"All is prepared," said the first voice; "and if we are bold we shall succeed. A single blow may do the work."

"Aye," said the second voice, "and the first blow must be a sure one. You will strike it."

And our listeners heard the first voice answer,—

"I will strike home, never fear. And if I succeed—"

"If you succeed," broke in the second voice, "your reward shall be even greater than I have yet promised. I will see that he is separated from his followers,—I will contrive that he shall be left alone—"

"And I," added the first voice, "will take care of the rest. I think we understand one another."

The second voice answered,—

"Perfectly. And now let us down into the lower city and make a night of it. I care not to sleep."

Directly after this the brazen gate was opened, and two men came forth. They were turbaned Moors, tall and stout, and he who had first emerged from the arch wore heavy trimming of gold upon his jacket, and a jewelled crescent gleamed upon his turban.—They did not speak again, but having closed and secured the gate they moved quickly and silently away.

"By my life!" cried Michael, when they had gone, "there go a precious pair of rascals."

"I believe you," returned Manfred.

"They are plotting for an assassination."

"Nothing less, surely."

"And their voices betray them to be cold-blooded villains. By San Dominic! I wish I had a clue to their secret. We might save a worthy man."

"Aye," responded Manfred regretfully, "we might if we only knew. But this concerns not us. The event is beyond our reach. Thanks, however, to the rising moon for showing me the garb of the chief plotter. I think I should know him again should I ever see him."

"You think he was the chief?"

"Aye. His step gave ample token thereof. The other man followed him."

"Right, my master. I marked him well."

"And you, too, would know him, Michael?"

"Certainly."

"And you may have opportunity to see him; but I—I—have other business."

"For which you will need a stout heart and a steady hand; so invite no moody spell. Have you no business to leave with me before you go forth to-morrow?"

"Yes, Michael; and we will return and attend to it."

They reached their inn without further adventure, where the knight arranged and gave into the hands of his esquire the business which might require attention in case he should fall in the approaching conflict, after which master and man retired. Michael, who lay upon a mattress of straw on the floor, slept soundly; but not so the knight upon his easier bed. He dreamed continually of fighting—now in the glade by the river's side, and anon by the angle of the wall of the court of the Alhambra,—but Guy of St. Mark was not his opponent in these phantom conflicts. The man who appeared against him, and who strove mightily for his life, was the turbaned Moor of the gold-laced jacket and the jewelled crescent. And now, in his dreams, Manfred beheld the man's features as though in living reality; and he heard that voice again—the voice of the second speaker,—and it seemed that he himself was the designated victim of the assassin's plot.

Manfred awoke, and slept again—slept only to dream the self-same dream once more—to dream it in every particular as before. He arose in the morning oppressed by the strange incubus, and Michael was forced to the exercise of great ingenuity to withdraw him from the moody fit. A cup of warm wine with an egg served the knight for the early meal, and as he began to prepare for the expedition his spirits grew less burdensome. He donned a fine shirt of mail—not the one with alternate links of gold, but one in which every link was of the finest tempered steel of Milan,—and for his head he took a velvet cap with a skull-piece inside of steel. Thus his upper body was protected; but as he was to fight on foot he chose not to cumber his lower limbs.

The sun was just rising above the mountain tops when Michael brought the horses to the door of the inn, and with the simple remark to their host that they were only going out for fresh air and exercise, they rode away.

It was an open glade, in a retired valley of the Darro. The silvery river flowed on beneath the shadows of giant oaks, while upon the other hand, where the glade sloped up to a hill-side, was a dense forest which offered rare sport to the huntsman. Sir Guy and his esquire were already upon the ground when Manfred arrived, and with but little ceremony the knights alighted, as did the attendants, allowing the horses to follow the bent of their own inclinations, being sure that the well-trained, faithful animals would not wander far away, and would come at a call.

"I know not," said Guy of St. Mark, as he approached his antagonist, "as there is need of further preliminaries. You have cast down the gauntlet, and I have accepted the gage."

"You should go back of that," returned Manfred. "The first gage was your own."

"How so?" demanded St. Mark.

"In that you did strike mine honor," replied de Alcala, with some warmth. "To the lady of my love you sought to traduce me."

"Nay, Manfred. Thou canst not say that."

"Cannot?" repeated the Knight of Alcala, hotly. "Call you not the doubts you would have cast upon my name—upon my birth—upon my mother—call you not that traducing? By heaven! Sir Guy, but thou hast a ready way of slipping the leash!"

A bright spot appeared upon Guy's either cheek as he answered,—

"Enough. I am here to answer in full; and may the right appear in the issue. I trust that we have both prepared for the bitterest result."

"I have prepared for the worst."

"It is well, and we will waste no further time. Let us fight where we stand. We cannot find better ground."

They threw off their cloaks, and also removed their baldrics, and stood, sword in hand, face to face. They were certainly a right gallant pair, and the experienced captain, seeking a soldier upon whose arm to cast the chance of a battle, would have hesitated which of the two to choose. The choice might have fallen upon Guy, as he seemed the stouter and the cooler; but the keen, subtle fire of Manfred's dark eye, and the elastic grace of his lithe and agile form, gave token of qualities that might be relied upon.

The sun had been rising higher and higher, and a ray of golden light fell athwart the sward as the knights advanced to the conflict. They had crossed their swords, and were gathering force and direction for the onset, when their attention was arrested by a cry in the forest near at hand. They wished not to be interrupted, nor cared they to have stranger witnesses to their encounter, so they dropped the points of their weapons and listened.

"Some passing huntsman, I think," said Guy, after they listened a time without hearing a repetition of the cry. "I am told that certain game in this forest is most readily captured at early dawn. Shall we proceed?"

Manfred nodded, and the swords were crossed again. But the fates were against them,—or, at least, against their combat. Not a dozen strokes had been made and parried when the cry was heard again, this time louder than before, and nearer at hand.

"Hark!" said Manfred, dropping the point of his sword. "That sounds like the call of one in distress."

Even as he spoke the cry came again—"*Help! Help!*" It issued from a point directly back from the river, near to the edge of the forest, and was evidently the cry of a man in deep distress. Guy and Manfred exchanged looks.

The cry sounded again, and now was heard the clash of arms.

"Santiago!" cried Manfred. "We will look to that first."

"To the rescue!" answered Guy.

And without further delay they rushed toward the spot whence issued the clang of conflict, followed closely by their esquires. They reached a narrow dell, where two huge chestnuts overhung their branches like an arch, and, beneath the deep shadows of the place, this was what they saw:

A man upon horseback was surrounded by six armed men who were seeking to bring him down. The horseman was a Moor of noble mien, of middle-age, and clad in a hunting garb of choicest texture. He had dropped his boar-spear, and was trying to keep his assailants at bay with his sword; but his strength was failing him, and those who attacked him from behind were pushing swiftly toward a consummation of their murderous purpose.

"Hold!" cried a voice from behind an adjacent thicket of underbrush. "Go not there!"

Neither Manfred nor Guy heeded the interruption; but Michael, who brought up the rear, recognized the cavalier of the tinselled jacket and the jewelled crescent—the same whom he had seen pass out from the court of the Alhambra on the previous evening. He took in the situation at a glance. This was the chief plotter, hiding from sight of the victim, while his tools did the work of assassination. And this man darted out into the path and held the esquire at bay.

"Whither now?" he demanded.

"To give succor where it is needed," replied Michael.

"Pass not. Hold where you are. You go to your death in there."

"I go, nevertheless."

"We shall see!"

And upon this the Moor raised his sword, and the esquire struck it down.

Meantime Guy and Manfred, followed by Pedro, had hurried forward to the assistance of the beleagured horseman. To their knightly understanding a fellow-creature thus outnumbered was deserving of their succor; and, moreover, the horseman appeared more of the gentleman than did the ruffians who surrounded him. It may have been a feeling of gladness at relief from their late contest, or it may have been but a feeling natural to the occasion; but, be the cause what it may, they went at the work before them with a ready zeal of strength and application that quickly attracted the attention of those upon whom their blows were aimed.

"How now, dogs!" cried Manfred, as he closed in the fray. "Do six of you set upon one man? Out upon thee!" And he struck down a ruffian who had turned toward him.

The horseman, seeing himself thus reinforced, hastened to leap from his saddle; and as Manfred and Guy had each slain a man, only four of the assailants were left to four antagonists; for good Pedro was at hand, and eager for the fray.

Manfred had stricken down one man, as we have seen, and directly afterward he was set upon by a stout warrior who wielded a sabre of immense size and weight.

"Dog of a Christian! take that for thy pains!"

Manfred parried the furious blow, but the sound of the voice for the instant withdrew his attention. It was the first voice of the preceding night—the voice of the assassin who had promised to strike the decisive blow! And thus strangely was the Knight of Alcala approaching a solution of the mystery! The thought dazed him for the instant, and before he could recover he dodged a blow which he could not parry. He saved his head, at which the blow had been aimed, but caught it on the left shoulder. The keen, heavy blade cut through the meshes of the mail, and found its way into the flesh; but the giant was not to repeat the stroke, for Manfred, when he found that the blow must fall, drew back his own weapon, and, with lightning-like swiftness, plunged it into the foeman's bosom. He shook the man from his blade, and saw him fall, and then turned to see that the battle had been won. Three of the ruffians had bitten the dust, and three had fled into the forest. He saw the Moor whom they had saved—saw that he wore a grand, majestic look—and then he felt a faintness coming over him, and he called for Michael.

But Michael did not come, and Guy of St. Mark caught the fainting man in his arms, and laid him gently upon the sward.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

GRANDMA'S DARLING.

When we reflect that wild children often grow up to be steady men, and when we look back into the early morning of our own lives, and call to mind the flighty freaks into which our childish passions often led us, we may bless the old lady who, in the fulness of her dear good heart, thus apostrophized her grandchild:

"O! he's a precious little fellow. I know he has his little failings,—we are none of us perfect,—but I do so enjoy his innocent freaks. Only to think of his putting the old cat into the fire; and throwing his grandfather's wig down into the cistern; and sticking his daddy's powder-horn into the stove; and tying the new tin coffee-pot to Jowler's tail; and setting off squibs in the barn; and getting my lace pad for a football; and taking my bobbin thread for a fish line. And, would you believe it,—only yesterday he built a fire of some of his uncle John's new shingles out in the sheep-yard, and then caught the old speckled hen and tried to roast her. O, bless his dear heart! He'll make something smart when he grows up!" C.

WIT AND HUMOR.

AN AMUSING ILLUSTRATION.—A female teacher of a school that stood on the banks of a quiet English stream, once wished to communicate to her pupils an idea of faith. While she was trying to explain the meaning of the word, a small covered boat glided in sight along the stream. Seizing upon the incident for an illustration, she exclaimed, "If I were to tell you that there is a leg of mutton in that boat, you would believe me, wouldn't you, even without seeing it yourselves?" "Yes, ma'am," replied the scholars. "Well, that is faith," said the schoolmistress. The next day, in order to test their recollection of the lesson, she inquired, "What is faith?" "A leg of mutton in a boat!" was the answer shouted from all parts of the school-room.

A YOUNG man, of melancholy countenance, recently deposited a package of letters in an express office for transmission to a certain lady. "What's the value of this package?" asked the clerk, poising his pen. "Only a few weeks ago," huskily answered the disconsolate youth, "I considered it worth four hundred thousand dollars, but now my hopes are blasted, and it's not worth more than five cents a pound."

"SEE here, you folks," said an agent of a row of tenement houses in the Sixth Ward, to a number of the tenants—"see here, I've news for you; your landlord is going to raise your rent." "The Lord bless the old darling!" exclaimed one of the women. "I was just a thinking how I was going to raise my rent for myself, and now here he sends us word that he's a going to raise it for all of us!"

OUR ADVANTAGE OVER EUROPEAN POWERS.—"Mr. President," said a U. S. Senator the other day in debate, "the honorable gentleman who has just taken his seat, says that England and Prussia have got torpedoes which can blow a navy sky-high. But that's nothing to us, Sir. It can't affect us; for, Sir, *we have no navy* to blow sky-high."

A PARISIAN marriage advertisement reads: "A lady of eighteen, with a fortune of two million of francs, educated, well born, and of amiable disposition, would like to enter into marriage with a *young* gentleman of equal fortune, and not *over sixty years of age!*" Some old fool will be caught by that delicate flattery of his sixty years.

"DO you execute this deed without any fear or compulsion of your husband?" asked a commissioner of deeds of a woman whose acknowledgment of a deed he was taking. "Fear of my *husband!*" exclaimed the irate lady. "*He—compel—me!* You're a fool!" And she swept indignantly from the commissioner's office.

FRENCH REVENGE ON GERMANY.—A French widow won ninety thousand dollars of a German gambler at Baden-Baden, and a French General, whose hatred of Germany is undying, married the widow and pocketed the German dollars.

A YOUNG lady, in Philadelphia, claiming the usual reduction made to clergymen on sewing machines, was asked, "On what grounds, Miss?" "Because," she blushingly replied, "I am engaged to a theological student."

A WARNING TO SMOKERS.—It has been definitely ascertained by scientific men that poison enough is taken into the system by a habitual smoker to cause death in one hundred and fifty-seven years.

"LET go that jib there!" sang out a Yankee captain, in a squall, to a new hand. "Do you hear me? Let go that jib!" "Why, blast yer pictur, I an't a touchin' your jib!" was the indignant response.

PA AND MA.—Why is the letter *d* like a squalling brat? Because it makes Ma mad. Why is the letter *y* like a young spendthrift? Because it makes Pa pay.

AN Arkansas editor says, "There will be five eclipses this year—two of the sun, two of the moon, and one of our political opponents."

A BACHELOR having advertised for a wife to share his lot, an "Anxious Inquirer" solicited information as to the size of said lot.

WHY are Indian servants called coolies? Probably because their principal duty is to fan their masters in the heat of the day.

BY industry, perseverance, honesty and economy one can make progress even in a stationery business.

WHY is the letter *m* like a man who feeds on fish? Because it makes *meals of eels*.

ABOUT the finest thing we have ever found, either in town or out of town, is—dust.

WHY should the male sex avoid the letter *a*? Because it makes men mean.

THE best time to cut corn is when it aches.

CURRENT ITEMS.

A POOR young man in St. John's, Newfoundland, recently married a girl seemingly as poor as himself, with whom he had fallen desperately in love. After the marriage, the bride astonished her husband by informing him that she had £1,000,000—five millions of dollars—in her own right, which she would divide with him.

THE lumbermen of the North-east, and also of the North-west, have done better this winter than for many years before, on account of the steady and long continued cold weather, which has kept the swamps frozen, and afforded snow enough to enable them to haul out their logs.

AN aged widow lady, whose husband left her a large amount of Erie stock—that constituted nearly his entire estate—on which she has received no dividend for several years, recently went insane on account of depression of mind and mental trouble, occasioned by the loss of her income.

A BOY in Bushnell, Ill., had his leg broken in a singular manner the other day. He was standing cross-legged, talking with a school-mate, when another boy thoughtlessly jumped upon his back and crushed him to the ground, breaking his leg below the knee.

A LITTLE boy, aged seven years, of Statsburgh, N. Y., was riding down hill with his brother, when becoming cold he started for home. While on the way he ran or slipped into an uncovered well, in which he was found dead about fifteen minutes afterward.

THE Italian government has proposed a convention with other European governments to devise means of protecting birds from destruction. What a change in the spirit of old world governments such a proposition indicates!

THE highest average pay of school-teachers in the State of Massachusetts is paid in Boston, and is $67.72 a month. The lowest is in the town of New Ashford, where the teachers' salaries average only $16 a month.

ON Sunday of last week forty-[illegible] converts were baptized in Jefferso[illegible], over a thousand spectators assemb[illegible] on the banks of the river to witness the performance of the baptismal rite.

IN West Davenport, Iowa, a family recently lost two of their seven children by scarlet fever, and on the week following the fever attacked the other children, when three of them died within the same hour.

A YANKEE has invented a sort of shampooing process for cleaning carpets, whereby the wear and tear occasioned by shaking and beating them is avoided, and the colors come out as bright as new.

CALIFORNIA papers report the death of an old Mexican woman, who was one hundred and thirty-two years of age. She was thirty-six years old when the Declaration of Independence was made.

THE parents of a little girl seven years old, living in New Haven, allowed her to play with a lighted candle, and she set her clothes on fire, and was burned so badly that she died in a few hours.

THERE is said to be a county in Iowa which contains two hundred and seventy-seven thousand acres, on which there is not a single tree. That is a big county, but it is hardly as big as the story.

TWO little girls in Anamosa, Iowa, were pulling at opposite ends of a string, when the string broke, and one of them fell backward into a tub of boiling water, and was scalded to death.

A WINE-MAKER in California recently gave a ball, where the dancing was done in one of his wine tanks, in which there was room for a set of dancers, a band, and twenty spectators.

LONDON, with a population of three [illegible] lions, has only nine daily newspapers—five morning and four evening; while Paris has twenty, [illegible] New York twenty-four.

A MAN in good circumstances, sixt[illegible] years old, committed suicide in the town of [illegible] hill, Mass., a few evenings ago, for fear of [illegible] to want.

CHICAGO'S wooden pavements seem t[illegible] been more durable than any other kind. It [illegible] that none of them have had to be relaid.

THE dead letters returned to Washi[illegible] last year contained three million dollars in drafts, etc.

TEXAS raised and sold a million b[illegible] pecan nuts last year.

THE FROZEN MILL WHEEL.

BY NATHAN D. URNER.

The frozen froth of the mill-race binds
The head of the stream with an icy wreath,
And the mighty wheel of the old mill hangs,
White bearded to the teeth.

Hushed is the voice that was wont to send
Through the woods its deep melodious roar,
And the brook beneath is tranced and still,
As if it would wake no more.

And the miller's cottage, above the mill,
Is silent too, these wintry days,
Since the sweet girl-beauty, its flower and pride,
In the distant city stays.

For thither her opulent cousins take
Our country bird ere the last leaf falls,
That her pure young beauty with health and life
May freshen their stupid halls.

But, like a bird in a gilded cage,
I know that she pines for the melting days
That shall loosen the voice of the old mill wheel
Through all the woodland ways.

Haste, haste, O Spring! on the swallow's wing,
From emerald glade and South sea shore,
And snap the chains of river and race,
And let the mill wheel roar;

That over the land, by tower and town,
Through the city that sits by the white sea foam,
Its echoes shall peal, like a passionate prayer,
To call our wood bird home.

The forests will flush into leaf as she comes,
And the glad streams shout as she passes them o'er,
Till the rapturous voice of her fresh young soul
Is mixed with the mill wheel's roar.

BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

By MRS. SOUTHWORTH,
AUTHOR OF "THE HIDDEN HAND," "SELF-MADE," "THE BROTHERS," ETC.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

THE RETURNED EXILE.

Danger, long travel, want, or woe,
Soon change the form that best we know;
For deadly fear can time outgo,
And blanch at once the hair;
Hard time can roughen form and face,
And grief can quench the eyes' bright grace;
Nor does old-age a wrinkle trace
More deeply than despair! SCOTT.

"VICTOR HARTMAN!" exclaimed Mr. Lyle, in a tone of astonishment and joy, as he sprang from his chair and grasped both the hands of the traveller and shook them heartily—"Victor Hartman! My dear friend, I am so delighted—and so surprised to see you! Sit down; sit down," he continued, dragging forward a chair and forcing his visitor into it. "But I never should have known you again," he concluded, gazing intently upon the bronzed, gray, tall, broad-shouldered man before him.

"I am much changed," answered the stranger, in a deep mellifluous voice, that reminded the hearer of sweet, solemn church music.

"Changed! Why, you left us a mere stripling! You return to us a mature man. To all appearance you might be the father of the boy who went away," said the minister, still gazing upon the stranger.

"And yet the time has not been long; though indeed I have lived much in that period," said the traveller, in the same rich, deep tone, and with a smile that rendered his worn face bright and handsome for the moment.

"Well, I am delighted to see you. But how is it that I have this joyful surprise?" inquired the minister.

"What brings me here, you would ask; and why did I not write and tell you that I was coming?" said Hartman, with an odd smile. "Well, I will explain. When I got your letter acknowledging the receipt of the last remittance I sent to you for my children, I learned for the first time by that same letter that my boy would graduate at this Commencement, and hoped to take the highest honors of his college. Well, a steamer was to sail at noon that very day. I thought I would like to be present at the Commencement, and see my boy take his degree. I packed my trunk in an hour, embarked in the *Porte d'Or* in another hour, and here I am."

"That was prompt. When did you arrive?"

"Our steamer reached New York on Thursday noon. I took the night train for Washington, where I arrived at five on Friday morning. I took the morning boat for Aquia Creek, and the train for Richmond and Charlottesville. I got here about noon."

"And you have not seen your protegés?"

"Yes, I have seen my boy pass the hotel twice to-day. I knew him by his likeness to his unfortunate father. But I did not make myself known to him. I do not intend to do so; at least not at present."

"Why not?"

"Why not?" echoed Hartman sorrowfully. "Ah! would he not shrink from me in disgust and abhorrence?"

"No; not if he were told the awful injustice that has been done you."

"But if he were told, would he believe it? We have no proof that any injustice has been done me, except those anonymous letters and the word of that strange horseman who waylaid me on my tramp and thrust a bag of gold in my hands with the words, 'You never intended to kill Henry Lytton, and you never killed him. Some one else intended to kill him, and some one else killed him.'"

"Have you ever heard anything more of that mysterious horseman?"

"Not one word."

"Have you no suspicion of his identity?"

"None beyond the strong conviction that I feel that he himself was the homicide, and the writer of the anonymous letters."

"Well, I cannot tell you why, but I always felt persuaded of your innocence, even before the coming of those anonymous letters, and even while *you* were bitterly accusing yourself."

"You knew it from intuition—inward teaching."

"May I ask you, Hartman, *why*, after you discovered that you had nothing to do with the death of Henry Lytton, you still determined to burden yourself with the support and education of his children—a duty that was first assumed by you as an atonement for an irreparable injury you supposed you had done them?"

"Why I still resolved to care for them after I learned that I had nothing to do with their great loss? Indeed I cannot tell you. Perhaps—partly because I sympathized with them in a sorrow that was common to us all, in so far as we all suffered from the same cause; partly, I also think, because it was pleasant to have *some one* to live for and work for; partly because I was so grateful to find myself free from blood-guiltiness, that I wished to educate those children as a thank-offering to Heaven! It was also very pleasant to me to think of this boy at college and this girl at school, and to hope that some day they might come to look upon me with affection, instead of with horror. And then I took so much pride in talking to my brother miners about my son at the University, and my daughter at the Academy! And then, again, your letters every one of them telling of the progress my children made, and the credit they were doing me. I tell you, sir, all this was a great comfort to me, and made me feel at home in this strange, lonesome world," said the exile warmly.

"Hartman, you have a noble soul! You must have made a very great pecuniary sacrifice for the sake of these young people," said the minister earnestly.

"No, sir; no sacrifice at all. That was the strangest part of it; for it seemed to me the more I gave, the more I had."

"How was that?"

"I don't know how it was, sir; but such was the fact. But I will tell you what I do know."

"Yes, tell me, Hartman."

"You may remember, Mr. Lyle, that when I told you I was going back to California, I explained to you that I knew a place where I felt sure money was to be made."

"Yes, I remember."

"Well, sir, the place was a gully at the foot of a certain spur of the mountains, called the Red Cleft. Now, at that time I knew very little of geology. I know more now. Also, I had had but little experience in mining; and, moreover, whenever I mentioned Red Ridge I was simply laughed at by my mates. I was laughed out of giving the place a fair trial. But even after I left the Gold State, the idea of the treasure hidden in the gully at the foot of Red Ridge haunted me day and night; something always prompting me to go back there and dig. Sir, it was intuition—inward teaching. When I went back to California, I made for Red Ridge. Sir, when I *first* went to Red Ridge, I dug there eight weeks without finding gold. That was the time my mates laughed at me. When I *next* went back—the time I now speak of—I worked four hours and then struck—struck one of the best paying mines in the Gold State. It is worked by a company now, but I have half of all the shares."

"You have been wonderfully blessed and prospered, Hartman."

"Yes," said the traveller, reverently bowing his head; "for their sakes, I have."

"And for your own, I trust, Hartman."

"Mr. Lyle?"

"Well, Hartman."

"May I ask you a favor?"

"Certainly you may."

"You addressed all your letters to me under the name of Joseph Brent."

"Yes, certainly, at your request."

"Continue, then, to call me Joseph Brent. That name is mine by act of legislature."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, and I have a still better claim. It was the name of my grandfather—my mother's father. It was also the name of his eldest son, my uncle, who died recently a bachelor, in the State of Missouri, and left me his farm there, on condition that I should take his name. I was more anxious to have his name than his estate. So I applied to the legislature, and the name that I had borrowed so long became my own of right."

"So I am to introduce you to my young friends as Mr. Joseph Brent?"

"Yes, if you please. Let the name of poor Victor Hartman sink quietly into the grave. And do not let them know that I was Victor Hartman, or that Joseph Brent was ever their benefactor," said the exile gravely.

"I will keep your counsel so long as you require me to do so, hoping that the time may speedily come when all shall be made as clear to these young people as it is to me."

"Now when will you introduce me to my children?"

"To-morrow, after the ceremonies are concluded. But, my friend, it is a little strange to hear you call these grown-up young people your children, when you yourself can be but little older than the young man."

"In years, yes. But in long experience, suffering, thought, how *much* older I am than he is! You yourself said that, to all outward appearance, I might be the father of the boy who went away two years ago."

"Yes, for you are very much changed; not only in your person, but in dress and in *address*."

"You mean that *I* speak a little more correctly than I used to do? Well, sir, in these two years all the time that was not spent in work was spent in study. Or rather, as study was to me the hardest sort of work, it would be most accurate to say, all the time not spent by me in manual, was spent in mental labor. I had had a good public-school education in my boyhood. I wished to recover all I had lost, and to add to it. You see, Mr. Lyle, I did not want my boy and girl to be ashamed of me when, if ever, we should meet as friends," said Hartman, with his old smile.

"That they could never be. Any other than grateful and affectionate they could never be to you—if I know them."

"I believe that too. I believe my children will love me, when they understand all."

"Be sure they will. But, Hartman—by the way, *I* like the name of Hartman; and I hope you will let me use it when we are alone, on condition that I promise never to use it when we are in company."

"As you please, Mr. Lyle."

"Then, Hartman, I was about to say that when I hear you speak of Henry Lytton's son and daughter as your boy and girl, the wonder comes over me as to whether you never think of marriage—of a wife and children of your own."

"Mr. Lyle, since my mother went away to heaven I have never felt any interest in any woman on earth. I have been interested in some girls, but they happened to be children; and I could count them with the fingers of one hand, and have a finger or two left over. Let me see," said Hartman, with his odd smile. "First there was Sal.'s Kid."

"Sal.'s Kid?" echoed the minister, who had never heard the name before, but thought it a very eccentric one.

"Yes, Sal.'s Kid—a wild-eyed, elf-locked, olive-skinned little imp, nameless, but nicknamed Sal.'s Kid, who lived in a gutter called Rat Alley, down by the water-side in New York. I used to be fond of the child when I was cook's galley-boy, and our ship was in port there. I haven't seen her for ten years, yet I've never forgotten her. And I would give a great deal to know what ever became of Sal.'s Kid. Probably she has gone the way of the rest. They were all beggars, thieves, or worse," added Hartman, with a deep sigh.

"And the next?" inquired the minister, with a wish to recall his visitor from sorrowful thoughts.

"The next girl that interested me," continued Hartman, looking up with a bright smile, as at the recollection of some celestial vision, "was as different from this one as the purest diamond from a lump of charcoal. She was a radiant blonde, with golden hair and sapphire eyes, and a blooming complexion. In the darkest hour of my life she appeared to me a heavenly messenger! They were leading me from the Court House to the jail, after my sentence. I was passing amid the hooting crowd, bowed down with despair, when this fair vision beamed upon me and dispersed the furies. She looked at me with heavenly pity in her eyes. She spoke to me and told me to pray, and said that she too would pray for me. At her look and voice the jeering crowd fell back in silence. I thought of that picture of Doré's where the celestial visitant dispersed the fiends. I have never, never seen her since."

"And you do not know who she was?"

"Her companions called her 'Emma.' That is all I know."

"The third girl in whom you became interested?"

"Is my child Laura Lytton, whom I have never seen. During the weeks I was in Mr. Lytton's law office I never once beheld his son or daughter."

"Then personally you are a stranger to both?"

"Yes, personally I am a stranger to both. But to-morrow I hope to know them, although I cannot be perfectly made known to them. Remember, Mr. Lyle, I do not wish them to know that I was ever Victor Hartman, or that Joseph Brent was ever their benefactor."

"I will remember your caution. But I will hope, as I said before, for the time when they shall know and esteem you as I know and esteem you."

"Your confidence in me has been, and is, one of my greatest earthly supports," said Hartman earnestly, as he arose to bid his friend good-night.

Long after his visitor had left him, Mr. Lyle sat at his window in an attitude of deep thought.

The unexpected meeting with Victor Hartman had deprived him of all power or wish to sleep.

He sat at the window watching the crowd that thronged the village streets with his outward eyes, but reviewing all the past with his inner vision. It was long after midnight before he retired.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

VICTOR MEETS "HIS CHILDREN."

The next morning revealed the full measure of the crowd that filled the little country town to overflowing. And the road leading from the village westward to the University was crowded with foot-passengers, horsemen and carriages of every description.

Those who had no reserved seats set out early, to secure the most eligible of the unreserved places.

The ceremonies were to commence at twelve noon.

Our party, consisting of Emma Cavendish, Laura Lytton, Electra Coroni, Mrs. Fanning, Mrs. Wheatfield, and Dr. Jones, occupied the whole of the third form from the front.

They were in their places just a few moments before the overture was played.

The hall was crowded to overflowing. Not only was every form filled, but chairs had to be set in the space between the audience and the orchestra, and also in the middle and side aisles, to accommodate ladies who could not otherwise be seated; while every foot of standing room was occupied by gentlemen.

Mr. Lyle had given up his seat next to Laura Lytton, in favor of a lady, and had explained to his party that he had a friend from San Francisco who was present, and with whom he could stand up.

And he went away and took up his position in a corner below the platform, beside Victor Hartman, but entirely out of the range of his party's vision.

I will not weary my readers with any detailed account of this Commencement, which resembled all other College Commencements in being most interesting to those most concerned.

There was an overture from a new opera.

Then there was an opening oration by one of the learned Professors of the University, which was voted by the savants to be a masterpiece of erudition and eloquence, but which the young people present found intolerably dull and stupid.

And when the great man sat down, a storm of applause followed him.

Then ensued the usual alternation of opera music and orations.

And the young people listened to the opera music, and yawned behind their fans over the orations.

And the savants gave heed to the orations, and closed their senses, if not their ears, to the music.

At length the time for the distribution of the diplomas arrived, and the names of the successful graduates were called out, and each in turn went up to receive his diploma, and make the customary deep bow, first to the faculty, and then to the audience.

Then followed the offertory of beautiful bouquets and baskets of flowers from friends, to the graduates. But the most beautiful offering there was a basket of delicate silver wire filled with fragrant pure white lilies, sent by Emma Cavendish to Alden Lytton.

Laura Lytton, in a patriotic mood, sent a bouquet composed of red, white and blue flowers only.

The other ladies of the party sent baskets of geraniums.

The Valedictory address was delivered by Alden Lytton, who had, besides, taken the highest honors of his college.

His address was pronounced to be a great success. And his retiring bow was followed by thunders of applause from the audience.

There were several proud and happy fathers there that day; but perhaps the proudest and the happiest man present was Victor Hartman.

With tearful eyes and tremulous tones he said, as he grasped Mr. Lyle's arm:

"My boy pays me for all! My boy pays me for all! He is a grand fellow!"

The people were all going out then.

"Come," said Mr. Lyle, himself moved by the generous emotion of Victor. "Come, and let me introduce you to your boy."

"No, not now. Let me go away by myself for a little while. I will see you an hour later at the hotel," said Hartman, as he wrung his friend's hand and turned away.

Mr. Lyle joined his party, with whom he found the most honored graduate of the day, who was holding his silver basket of lilies in his hand and warmly thanking the fair donor.

Mr. Lyle shook hands with Alden, and heartily congratulated him on his collegiate honors, adding:

"We shall see you on the Bench yet, Mr. Lytton."

Alden bowed, and laughingly replied that he should feel it to be his sacred duty to get there, if he could, in order to justify his friend's good opinion.

"But what have you done with your Californian, Mr. Lyle?" inquired Laura Lytton.

"Sent him back to his hotel. By the way, ladies, he is a stranger here. Will you permit me to bring him to see you this evening?"

"Certainly, Mr. Lyle," promptly replied Emma Cavendish, speaking for all.

But then she gave a questioning glance toward her aunt, the chaperon of the young party.

"Of course," said Mrs. Fanning, in answer to that glance. "Of course the Rev. Mr. Lyle's introduction is a sufficient passport for any gentleman to any lady's acquaintance."

Mr. Lyle bowed, and said:

"Then I will bring him at eight o'clock this evening."

And with another bow, he also left the party and hurried off to the hotel.

That evening, at eight o'clock, the three young ladies were seated alone together in the front drawing-room of their boarding-house. Their elderly friends were not present.

Dr. Jones was dining at the college with Alden Lytton and his fellow-graduates.

Mrs. Fanning, fatigued with the day's excitement, had retired to a dressing-gown and sofa in her own room.

Mrs. Wheatfield was in consultation with her cook concerning the next day's bill of fare.

Thus the three beauties were left together, and very beautiful they looked.

Emma Cavendish, the "radiant blonde, with the golden hair and sapphire eyes, and blooming complexion," was dressed in fine pure white tulle, with light blue ribbons.

Electra, the wild-eyed, black-haired, damask-cheeked brunette, was dressed in a maize colored silk, with black lace trimmings.

Laura Lytton, the stout, wholesome, brown-haired and brown-eyed lassie, wore a blue *barége* trimmed, like Electra's dress, with black lace.

The room was brilliant with gas-light, and they were waiting for their friends and visitors.

Dr. Jones had promised to return, and bring Alden with him, by eight o'clock at latest. And Mr. Lyle had promised to come and bring "the Californian."

The clock struck eight, and with dramatic punctuality the bell rang.

The next moment the little page of the establishment opened the drawing-room door, and announced:

"Mr. Lyle and a genman."

CHAPTER XC.

AN INTRODUCTION.

The three young ladies looked up, to see Mr. Lyle enter the room, accompanied by a tall, finely formed, dark-complexioned man, with deep dark eyes, and black hair and full black beard, both lightly streaked with silver, which, together with a slight stoop, gave him the appearance of being much older than he really was.

Mr. Lyle bowed to the young ladies, and then taking his companion up to Emma Cavendish, he said, with old-fashioned formality:

"Miss Cavendish, permit me to present to you my friend Mr. Brent of San Francisco."

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Brent," said the young lady, with a graceful bend of her fair head.

But in an instant the Californian seemed to have lost his self-possession.

He stared for a moment almost rudely at the young lady; he turned red and pale; drew a long breath; then, with an effort, recovered himself, and bowed deeply.

Miss Cavendish was surprised; but she was too polite and self-possessed to let her surprise appear. She mentally ascribed the disturbance of her visitor to some passing cause.

Mr. Lyle, who had not noticed his companion's agitation, now presented him to Laura Lytton and to Electra Coroni.

To Laura he bowed gravely and calmly.

But when he met the wild eyes of Electra, he started violently, and exclaimed:

"Sal.'s—" then stopped abruptly, bowed, and took the chair that his friend placed for him.

He sat in perfect silence, while Emma Cavendish, pitying, without understanding his awkwardness, tried to make conversation, by introducing the subject of California and the gold mines.

But Victor Hartman replied with an effort, and frequently and furtively looked at Emma, and looked at Electra, and then put his hand to his head in a perplexed manner.

At length his embarrassment became obvious even to unobservant Mr. Lyle, who longed for an opportunity of asking him what was the matter.

But before that opportunity came, there was another ring at the street door bell, followed by the entrance of Dr. Jones and Alden Lytton.

The last comers greeted the young ladies and Mr. Lyle, and acknowledged the presence of the stranger with a distant bow.

But then Mr. Lyle arose, and asked permission to introduce his friend Mr. Brent of California.

And Dr. Jones and Mr. Lytton shook hands with the Californian, and welcomed him to Virginia.

Then Alden Lytton, who had some dim dreams of going to California to commence life, with the idea of one day becoming Chief Justice of the State, began to draw the stranger out on the subject.

Victor Hartman, the unknown and unsuspected benefactor, delighted to make the acquaintance of "his boy," and to learn all his half-formed wishes and purposes, talked freely and enthusiastically of the Gold State, and its resources and prospects.

"If all that I have heard about the condition of society out there be true, however, it must be a much better place for farmers and mechanics, tradesmen and laborers, than for professional men."

"What have you heard, then, of the condition of society out there?" inquired Victor.

"Well, I have heard that the climate is so healthy that the well who go there never get sick, and the sick who go there get well without the doctor's help. And furthermore, that all disputes are settled by the fists, the bowie-knife, or the revolver, without the help of lawyer, judge or jury! So you see, if all that is told of it is true, it is a bad place for lawyers and doctors."

"'If all that is told of it is true?' There is not a word of it true! It is all an unpardonable fabrication," said Victor Hartman, so indignantly and solemnly, that Alden burst out laughing as he answered:

"Oh, of course I know it is an exaggeration. I did think of trying my fortune in the Gold State; but upon reflection I have decided to devote my poor talents to my mother State, Virginia. And not until she practically disowns me, will I desert her!"

"Well said, my dear bo—I mean, Mr. Lytton," assented the Californian.

He had begun heartily, but ended by correcting himself with some embarrassment.

Alden looked up for an instant, a little surprised by his disturbance; but ascribed it to the awkwardness of a man long debarred from ladies' society, as this miner seemed to have been.

Gradually Victor Hartman recovered his composure, and talked intelligently and fluently upon the subject of gold mining, Chinese emigration and so forth.

Only when he would chance to meet the full gaze of Electra's "wild eyes," or catch the tones of Emma's mellifluous voice. Then, indeed, he would show signs of disturbance. He would look or listen, and put his hand to his forehead with an expression of painful perplexity.

At ten o'clock the gentlemen arose to bid the young ladies good-night.

It was then arranged that the whole party should visit the University the next day, and go through all the buildings on a tour of inspection.

When the visitors had gone, Electra suddenly inquired:

"Well, what do you think of the Californian?"

"*I* think him very handsome," said Laura, "but decidedly the most awkward man I ever saw in all the days of my life. Except in the matter of his awkwardness he seems to be a gentleman."

"Oh! that is nothing. One of the most distinguished men I ever met in my father's house—a gentleman by birth, education and position, a statesman of world-wide renown—was unquestionably the most awkward human being I ever saw in my life. He knew very well how to manage men and nations, but he never knew what to do with his feet and hands; he kept shuffling them about in the most nervous and distracting manner," said Emma Cavendish, in behalf of the stranger.

"Somehow or other that man's face haunts me like a ghost," mused Electra dreamily.

"So it does me," quickly spoke Emma. "I feel sure that I have met those sad, wistful dark eyes *somewhere* before."

"I'll tell you both what. Whether you have ever met him before or not, he *thinks* he has seen you. He seemed to me to be trying to recollect *where*, all the evening," said Laura Lytton, with her air of positiveness.

"Then that might account for his awkwardness and embarrassment," added Emma.

"But he is certainly very handsome," concluded Electra, as she took her candle to retire.

Meanwhile the four gentlemen walked down the street together to a corner, where they bade each other good-night and separated—Dr. Jones and Alden Lytton to walk out to the University, and Mr. Lyle and Victor Hartman to go to their hotel.

"What on earth was the matter with you, Victor?" inquired Mr. Lyle, as they walked on together.

"What?" exclaimed Hartman, under his breath, and stopping short in the street.

"Yes, what! I never saw a man so upset without an adequate cause in all my life."

"Don't let us go into the house yet," said Victor, for they were now before the door of the hotel. "It is only ten o'clock, and a fine night. Take a turn with me down some quiet street, and I will tell you."

"Willingly," agreed Mr. Lyle, and they walked past the hotel and out toward the suburbs of the little town.

"Mr. Lyle, I have seen them both!" exclaimed Victor, when they were out of hearing of every one else.

"Both? Whom have you seen, Hartman?" inquired the minister a little uneasily, as if he feared his companion was not quite sane.

"First I have seen again the heavenly vision that appeared and dispersed the furies from around me on that dark day when I passed, a condemned criminal, from the Court House to the jail," replied Victor Hartman, with emotion.

"Hartman, my poor fellow, are you mad?"

"No; but it was enough to make me so. To meet one of them, whom I never expected to see again in this world, would have been enough to upset me for a while. But to meet both, and to meet them together, who were so widely apart in place and in rank, I tell you it was bewildering! I felt as if I was under the influence of opium, and in a delightful dream from which I should soon awake. I did not quite believe it all to be real. I do not quite believe it to be so yet. *Have* I seen that celestial visitant again?" he inquired, putting his hand to his head in the same confused manner.

"Now which one of these young ladies do you take to have been your 'celestial visitant,' as you most absurdly call her?"

"Oh, the fair, golden-haired, azure-eyed angel, robed so appropriately in pure white!"

"That was Miss Emma Cavendish," said Mr. Lyle very uneasily; "and you talk of her like a lover, Hartman—and like a very mad lover too. But oh, I earnestly implore you, do not become so very mad, so frenzied as to let yourself love Emma Cavendish. By birth, education and fortune, she is one of the first young ladies in the country, and a bride for a prince. Do not, I conjure you, think of loving her yourself!"

Victor Hartman laughed a little light laugh, that seemed to do him good, as he answered:

"Do not be afraid. I worship her too much to think of loving her in the way you mean. And, besides, if I am not greatly mistaken, *my boy* has been before me."

"Alden Lytton?"

"Yes, sir. I saw it all. I was too much interested not to see it. My boy and my angel like one another. Heaven bless them both! they are worthy of each other. They will make a fine pair. He so handsome; she so beautiful! He so talented; she so lovely! His family is quite as good as hers. And as for a fortune, his shall equal hers!" said Victor warmly.

"Will you give away all your wealth to make your 'boy' happy?" inquired Mr. Lyle, with some emotion.

"No! The Red Cleft mine is not so easily exhausted. Besides, in any case I should save something for my girl. She must have a marriage portion too!"

"You really ought to have a guardian appointed by the court to take care of you and your money, Victor. You will give it all away. And, seriously, it grieves me to see you so inclined to rob yourself so heavily to enrich others, even such as these excellent young people," said Mr. Lyle, with feeling.

"Be easy. When I have enriched them both, I shall still have an unexhausted gold mine! By the way, parson! parson!"

"Well, Hartman?"

"I saw something else besides the love between my angel and my boy. I saw—saw a certain liking between my girl and my friend."

If the bright starlight had been bright enough, Victor Hartman might have seen the vivid blush that mantled all over the ingenuous face of Stephen Lyle.

"I certainly admire Miss Lytton very much. She is a genuine girl," said Mr. Lyle, as composedly as if his face was not crimson.

"And I see she certainly admires you very much. She evidently thinks you are a genuine man. So, my dear friend, go in and win. And my girl shall not miss her marriage portion," said Hartman cordially.

Mr. Lyle was beginning to feel a little embarrassed at the turn the conversation had taken, so he hastened to change it, by saying:

"You told me that you had met them *both* whom you never had expected to see again in this world. One was Miss Cavendish, your 'heavenly vision;' who was the other?"

"Can you be at a loss to know? There were but three young ladies present. My own girl whom I went to see, and *did* expect to meet; Miss Cavendish, whom you have just identified as one of the two alluded to, and the brilliant little creature whom you introduced by a heathenish sort of name which I have forgotten."

"Miss Electra?"

"Aye, that was the name; but however you call her, *I* knew her in Rat Alley as Sal.'s Kid."

"WHAT?" exclaimed Mr. Lyle, stopping short and trying to gaze through the darkness into the face of his companion; for Mr. Lyle had never happened to hear of the strange vicissitudes of Electra's childhood.

"She is Sal.'s Kid, I do assure you. Her face is too unique ever to be mistaken. I could never forget or fail to recognize those flashing eyes and gleaming teeth. And I tell you, I would rather have found her again as I found her to-night, than have discovered another gold mine as rich as that of Red Cleft."

"Hartman, you were never more deceived in your life. That young lady, Electra Coroni, is the granddaughter of Dr. Beresford Jones, and is the sole heiress of Beresford Manors. She was educated at the Mount Ascension Academy for Young Ladies, in this State, from which she has just graduated."

"Whoever she is, or whatever she is, or wherever she lives *now*, when *I* knew her she was Sal.'s Kid, and lived in Rat Alley, New York. And she knew me as Galley Vick, the ship's cook's boy."

"Hartman, you have certainly 'got a bee in your bonnet!'"

"We shall see. She *almost* recognized me to-night. She will quite know me soon," answered Victor, as they turned their steps toward their hotel.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A SCHOOL ROW.

At school, young Quaver was the ringleader in every kind of mischief, and his exploits are traditional in the respectable academy of Messrs. Birch and Ferule. An anecdote is related of young Quaver, which seems to me, as a faithful biographer, to merit repetition. Mr. Birch, for some reason or other with which I am unacquainted, was furnished with the soubriquet of Muffle. His knowledge of the fact excited his indignation to the highest pitch. One day young Quaver, in construing his Latin lesson, stumbled over the word *ludimagister*, which our erudite readers need not be informed means *schoolmaster*, literally *master of sports*. "Come, sir," said Mr. Birch, "tell us what *ludimagister* means." "Don't know," answered Quaver. "Instantly, sir." "Tell you I don't know." "Then you have been idle, and neglected your lesson." "No, sir, I studied diligently; but I forget what this word means." "I insist on your telling me." "How can I when I don't know?" "Out with it, sir!" "Well, if I must say something," answered the undaunted Quaver, fixing an eagle eye upon the master, "if I must say something, it means—it means—*muffle!*" A deafening roar of applause from the upper benches of the room followed this audacious sally. The master stamped his feet, and vociferated in an agony of wrath. Quaver was dragged from his post, and made to endure a severe flagellation. "Now," said Mr. Birch, when, tired of the exercise, he laid aside his rod; "now, what does *ludimagister* mean, rascal?" "Muffle!" screamed the gallant boy. And now the bigger boys yelled in an agony of delight. Discipline was set at defiance, and in the mad delirium of their pleasure, they rushed at once into rebellion. As the contumacy of William Tell kindled the revolt against Gesler, so did the hardihood of Quaver bring on the dreadful scene of an academical row. A painter would have been forcibly reminded of Hogarth's Battle of the Books; for Messrs. Birch and Ferule were buried beneath an avalanche of volumes. The air was darkened with dictionaries, and swarming with classics. Authors jostled each other worse than ever. Stationery became suddenly locomotive, and benches remarkably restive. In the midst of the *melée*, the daring Quaver perceived his tormentor prostrate beneath a pile of books. Quick as thought he seized an inkstand, and overturned it on the master's head. Having thus anointed the deposed monarch, he proceeded to sand his sable locks, and then ran home to avoid the consequences. The next morning there was a grand meeting of trustees; the mass of scholars was pardoned, but Master Quaver was expelled.

SECRETS OF COMFORT.—Though sometimes small evils, like invisible insects, inflict pain, and a single hair may stop a vast machine, yet the chief secret of comfort lies in not suffering trifles to vex one, and in prudently cultivating an undergrowth of small pleasures, since very few great ones, alas! are let on long leases.

NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 1872.

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THE NEW YORK LEDGER
FOR THE NEW YEAR, 1872.

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A Disgraceful Proceeding.

The following recently appeared as a special dispatch in the New York *Evening Post:*

"WASHINGTON, March 5.—Mr. Shultz, of the firm of Shultz & Clark, in Vesey street, New York, was before the New York Custom House Investigating Committee this morning, to complain of the manner in which his books had been seized and examined last Friday by the Custom House officials, at the instance of an anonymous communication."

If merchants, doing a regular business, are liable to have their books seized by the emissaries of the Internal Revenue Department, or the Custom House, on no better authority than an anonymous letter, things have come to such a pass that a radical change is demanded.

It was against just such seizures as this that PATRICK HENRY warned his countrymen, if they should consent to the adoption of a Constitution without a Bill of Rights, which should contain the essential principles of Magna Charta. In consequence of his exertions, and those of his great compeers, and in obedience to the general demand of the people of all sections, almost as soon as the Constitution of the United States had been ratified, certain amendments were made to it, among which was the following:

"ARTICLE IV.—The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated; and no warrants shall issue but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."

Is not a search upon an anonymous letter an unreasonable search? Has not the plain letter of the Constitution been violated?

It is to be hoped that a system of taxation and revenue may be devised and adopted which will not require the employment of the myriad of public officers who now violate the rights and prey upon the substance of the people. The smaller the number of public officers the better. Puffed up by a little brief authority, they assume an air of importance and of insolence which is intolerable. Let Congress abolish their places, and send them back into private life to labor for a living.

"The world is governed too much," said a wise statesman. This country is governed a good deal too much, and the people have too many petty, insignificant and contemptible officers over them at present.

Limit Your Wants, Young Men.

Lord BOLINGBROKE, in his "Reflections upon Exile," says: "Our natural and real wants are confined to narrow bounds, while those which fancy and custom create are confined to none."

Young men who are just entering upon life, and forming the habits which are likely to adhere to them to its close, will do well to treasure up in memory these true and instructive words of one of England's finest writers and most philosophic statesmen.

"Our natural and real wants are confined to narrow bounds." It is surprising how little it is that is absolutely essential to man's existence, and, if he will take an intelligent and considerate view of life, to his comfort and happiness. Intellectual enjoyments are comparatively cheap. The cultivation of the mind, which affords the highest and the only enduring satisfaction, can be pursued on an income quite insignificant for the supply of luxuries.

Our physical wants are very few, if we preserve our tastes simple, as they are by nature. To eat, to drink, to exercise, to sleep, to keep warm and to be sheltered: a small sum will supply all these necessities. The pleasures which are pure, and which tend to our improvement, are within the reach of almost every one.

But the wants which fancy and custom create, as Lord BOLINGBROKE well says, are confined to no bounds. It is against these that young men on the threshold of life should sedulously guard. Beware of luxurious and expensive habits. The gratification of them may cost you much of the labor and time which, if given to intellectual cultivation, would be far more conducive to happiness. It is easy to do without that which you have never indulged in. It is hard to leave off habits, however extravagant and absurd. When you are to decide about adopting a mode or style of living, consider well whether it is certain that, without inconvenience, you will be able always to preserve it. The only safe rule is, to keep your wants within narrow bounds.

Dexter in 2:16.

The *Turf, Field and Farm* of June 29, 1867,—before Mr. BONNER purchased *Dexter*—said of him:

"The little Hambletonian covered himself with honor, as he trotted one mile in 2 minutes and 16 seconds, the best time by several seconds ever made in harness."

Shoeing Horses—The Importance of Doing it in the Right Way.

Our attention was long ago attracted to the importance of having horses properly shod.

One of the earliest improvements which we adopted in shoeing consisted in cutting open the heels. This we learned from a Canadian. It was a good idea, but a crude one; and we have now abandoned it, having got from another source a substitute which produces the same effect, and is better.

A man, in order to gain a perfect or even considerable knowledge of the horse's foot, should have no prejudice, either way, for or against any source of information. He should be prepared to learn anything that he can from anybody who knows it.

We have purchased and read and studied all the books treating of the horse's foot, which were to be had anywhere. Such as we could not obtain in this country we have imported. Yet we are constantly acquiring new and additional light on the matter, and being free from predilections on the subject, we not unfrequently modify our views on one point or another.

On the whole, now, we are enabled to direct the shoeing of our own stable of horses vastly more to our own satisfaction than ever before. Still, we hope to acquire as much more information as we already possess. A great deal must always depend on personal judgment and discretion in applying even the best ascertained general principles.

It is not commonly understood, but it is nevertheless a fact, that ringbones, spavins, curbs, windgalls, shoulder lameness, strains of the loins, "hitching," etc., etc., all arise from either malformation of the feet, or improper shoeing, or both combined. If the feet are kept in proper shape, and properly shod, it is, in our opinion, well-nigh impossible for a horse to be troubled with any of the complaints we have enumerated. Hence the importance of good shoeing.

But the reader is probably ready to ask, how ought a horse to be shod? We will answer in this way: There are no two horses in our stable that we would shoe precisely alike; consequently, we are not inclined to give general directions. At one time, when we had made but little progress in our studies, we experienced considerable benefit from opening the heels and cutting down the foot; but we have since that time, as we have already intimated, found out "a more excellent way," which we now practice.

Lameness is not confined, as many people think, to horses that have been shod for a number of years. Last autumn we saw several colts in Orange and Suffolk counties that were "perfect cripples," and yet they had never been shod! At Comac, Long Island, Mr. SMITH BURR, who has for over thirty years ranked—and deservedly so—as a leading horseman of Suffolk county, called our attention to a little colt, only six months old, that was so lame that it could scarcely move, and yet neither Mr. BURR nor any one in the neighborhood could tell where the lameness was seated. Some persons thought that the colt was lame in the whirl-bone, and others that the trouble was in the stifle-joint: but no one thought of locating it in the feet, where it undoubtedly was. The poor little thing was suffering from a morbid growth or malformation of the hoof. There are many such cases all over the country. At Mr. HAMMOND'S farm, near New London, Conn., a high-bred colt, only eight months old, was affected in this same way last fall. It was deemed incurably lame, and in order to put an end to its misery, it was killed. We have the affected foot in our possession. It has been sawn in two, and the displacement of the coffin and navicular bones, produced by the morbid growth of the hoof, shows conclusively how and where the trouble originated.

Our advice to those of our readers who desire to understand this subject, is to make a thorough study of it themselves. But no one must undertake it under the impression that he can master it in a day, or a week, or a month. Begin by taking lessons from ROBERGE, LEE or BRYDEN. You can learn something really valuable from every one of them. They all have systems of their own—and every one has some important things that he has himself originated. Dr. BRYDEN of Boston, all things considered, as a veterinary surgeon, which includes a knowledge of the foot, we prefer to any other veterinary surgeon in the country. The others—ROBERGE and LEE—are not veterinary surgeons. They confine themselves to the foot exclusively, and have done and are doing a great deal of good in their special department.

Stokes—His Enemies and His Friends.

The day for the trial of STOKES for murdering or killing FISK, has not yet been fixed upon. STOKES, we understand, is himself anxious to have the trial come off at an early day; but it is said his lawyers, who expect to be able to prove that he shot FISK in self-defence, do not appear to be so anxious to have the trial take place immediately, on account of the strong prejudice that exists against their client. They complain that several of the daily papers are in the pay of the Erie Railway robbers, and that the money that properly belongs to the stockholders of that corporation is being freely used to poison the public mind against STOKES. Whether this is so or not, we do not know; but if it is, it is fortunate for STOKES that he is not a poor, friendless young man. He has wealthy and influential friends, and it is not likely that they will let the Erie people have everything their own way. STOKES'S father-in-law is a retired merchant, named SOUTHACK, who is reputed to be very rich; and his uncle, JAMES STOKES, is also a very wealthy man. He is a partner in the well-known firm of PHELPS, DODGE & Co. This is the same firm of which our great merchant orator, the Hon. WM. E. DODGE, is a member.

What a Good Wife Thinks about It.

A lady in Lawrence, Indiana, in a letter to the *Ledger,* expresses the following views of dissatisfied wives:

"Having read so much about domestic difficulty between husbands and wives, I thought I would write a few lines on the subject. I think those women who are sending so many complaints to you about their bad treatment by their husbands, would do much better if they would try to make themselves, by making others happy. I know that men have their failings, and it is the duty of a woman to consider well her husband's nature. The moon is, of itself, a dark planet; but when the sun shines full upon it, it reflects on the earth a most beautiful light. So is it with some men. They are dark, gloomy and morose. But let the wife whom such a man loves, meet him with a happy countenance and sunny smiles and pleasant words, and see how quickly he will brighten up, and reflect back upon the household a pleasant light. How nicely and cheerfully such a light makes the evening pass off!"

The plan of our correspondent is a simple one, easily put in practice, and we recommend that all dissatisfied wives try the experiment which she proposes. The repining and complaining of one member sours a whole household. So, on the other hand, an amiable temper, such as our correspondent seems to possess, does much to sweeten the dispositions of others, and to render those by whom a person is surrounded also amiable.

If You would be Rich, You must Work.

[From the N. Y. Tribune.]

It is useless, it is madness, for men in this age to talk of getting rich at any business that does not require work. That a man must work in order to succeed, or even to be a man, is a blessed law.

DISAGREEABLE LIBERTIES—THE MONTH THAT TAKES THEM.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

March is here. It reaches out long hands, which no one can escape, to greet us. It rushes into our arms boisterously; it takes the most turbulent and disagreeable liberties with eyes and ears; it pries into every secret place, peeping through crack and singing through crevice with a vexatious violence and pert egotism, saying, in every possible tone, "Spring has arrived. March, you know, your old friend March; I am he. How glad I am to see you again! Let me embrace you and kiss you! Dear me, what are those tears in your eyes? How rosy your cheeks are! What *do* you bundle yourselves up for in so many clothes? Winter is gone. I am come. I am the first come of the long line of months," etc., etc.

Now, March, be it said with all respect for the almanac, is a nuisance! It takes on airs. Pretending to be a friend, it has a cold heart. There is no generosity, but a concealed malice in its disposition. By fair speeches it tempts robins and blue-birds and sparrows to the north, and then, winking at the sheriff wind, it pounces down on them all, and clutches them with icy hands.

What a week has this first week in March been! A friend in Florida writes that the thermometer stood at ninety degrees. While on Brooklyn Heights, on that veritable date, it was standing near to zero. This is what March says to the North and the South. It is the old trick of politicians—one thing for one, and another thing for another section.

I am tired of it. I hate its harsh winds. My nose grows red with indignation. My hands are chapped; my skin is chilled. I hear of one and another down with *pneumonia.* Everybody is coughing. We cannot keep the house warm. We pile on coal, but the wind is too fierce, and beats the furnace completely. The river is blocked up with ice. The ferry-boats grind and crush through the wallowing masses, or get stuck, and float helplessly away down the harbor. Yet the sky is clear, brilliant, magnificent! High in the air fly the lordly gulls. They love the cold; they dip down gracefully to scoop up the floating food which here and there swims on the surface, when openings in the ice give chance. But there are no cracks in their feathers. The wind never gets in. They feed and then rise far up in the blue, and sail with so stately a flight that one might, from their demeanor, take them to be eagles, and not gulls. I love to watch them. They are the eminent birds of cold weather. When milder airs unlock the North they thin out, and though some doubtless remain and breed on near shores, the most of them go toward the poles for domestic duties. They are the true arctic explorers. Could we ride on their soft backs a few hours, we could tell all about the arctic open sea. Mighty nations have with all their enginery sought in vain to enter the secluded North. These plushy birds, with pic-nic hilarity, will start off some evening and the next day plume their wings on the desolate shore of that polar ocean where no human foot has trod, but which a hundred eager hearts are every year in vain striving to reach.

Well, my temper is growing more placid. I will forgive March if it will play messenger for me and run for April, to tell that welcome month that the earth waits for it; that a thousand maiden flowers, and imprisoned roots, and silent seeds lie in the great Enchantress' castle and sleep, with hardly life enough for a dream, but waiting for the sweet deliverer to set them free.

At the touch of April they all will spring forth—the spell broken, the sorcery at an end—the white, stern, wizzard Winter driven back, and life and gladness, birds and their singing, all come back again!

BACK TRACK ON THE PLATFORM.

Every written or spoken sentence *not* calculated to benefit mankind, carries with it, I verily believe, its own antidote in the shape of narrowness, or bigotry.

This comforting thought occurred to me on leaving a lecture hall the other evening, where the speaker, in saying some very good things, had mentioned all female employments, save housekeeping, especially those of writing and lecturing, with utter contempt, averring that the education and training of children were the only things worthy their notice. He did not stop to explain what was to become of all the old maids and single women generally; or whether they might be excused for earning an honest support by pen and ink, or even stepping upon the platform, when they had no "home," and consequently no "home duties" to attend to; and whether, if the lecture they should deliver were as narrow and illogical as his own, the patient public might not, as in his case, be willing to *pay* and *listen.* Also, while insisting upon every woman being a mother, and desiring nothing beyond her nursery walls, not even her own intellectual progression, to qualify her to meet the questioning *youth,* as well as the dependent *infancy* of her children, I heard not one syllable from him upon the home duty devolving on the *father* and *the husband,* as to his share in their government and *home* education, which, in my opinion, is more important than that of school; nor of the cultivation of his companionable qualities, to assist in making home pleasant. Not a word did he say on this head, no more than as if these things were not binding equally on him as on the wife. As if that *could* be "home," in any true sense, where *both* did not know and practice these duties. He told us it was "of course more pleasant for women to be like the noisy cascade, and to mount the platform, than to imitate the gentle, silent rivulet, and stay quietly at home out of the public eye." As the lecturer had a home himself, and was a husband and father, and not particularly in need of any emolument from lecturing, it occurred to me that the propriety of his own absence from the "gentle rivulet" of home duties might admit of a doubt. It could not be possible that he who could map out a wife's home duty by such strict latitude and longitude, should himself have wearied of their tameness, and "mounted the platform to keep in the public eye?"

What nonsense even a male lecturer may utter! said I, as I left his presence. As if there were no women, good and earnest as well as gifted, who neglected no duties while mounting the platform, but who honored it with their womanly, dignified presence, and made every large-souled, large-brained man who listened to them rejoice that they were there.

This "vine and oak" style of talk is getting monotonous. There is more "oak" to the women of to-day than there was to those of the past. Else how could the great army of drunken, incompetent, unpractical, idle husbands be supported as they are by wives, who can't stop to be "gentle, silent rivulets," but have to "keep in the public eye" as business women? Our lecturer didn't mention this little fact—not he! FANNY FERN.

Lived Longer than She Expected.

An old lady, Mrs. EDWARDS, died recently in Illinois, at the age of ninety-six. The Dubuque *Telegraph* says:

"Thirty-six years ago, while living in Galena, at the age of sixty, she looked forward to the time when she would be dressed in the habiliments of the grave. She accordingly had a funeral habit made by Mrs. Dignan, since deceased. That dress, most elegantly embroidered by fine specimens of needlework, now forms her vestments as she lies in the placidity of death as one who led a beautiful life—as one from whom not even death could remove the calm and peaceful expressions that still linger upon her features."

PAST, FUTURE AND PRESENT.

AN ALLEGORY.

BY JOHN G. SAXE.

Once on a time—we need not care
Too nicely for the *when* and *where*—
Three Princes, who, since Time had birth,
Have ruled three provinces on earth,
Whate'er the scope of human aims,
(*Past, Future, Present,* were their names,)
Met, on a pleasant Summer's day,
And talking in a friendly way
Of topics such as neighbors use
For mere companionship—the news,
The weather, or mayhap the price
Of bullion since the last advice
Touching the royal health—began
At length to speculate on Man,
And his affairs; in brief, on all
Such subtle themes as, since the Fall,
Have puzzled moralists; and then
From such deep talk concerning men
As ranged from Providence to Fate,
They fell, at last, to sharp debate
About themselves, as, who might be
In power the greatest of the three?
"I," said the *Past,* "must be the one,
Since all things great were surely done
By me—there's naught in all the land
But bears the impress of my hand!"
"*True,*" said the *Future;* "yet reflect,
Your doings claim but small respect,
Compared with mine—since all to be
Henceforward will be ruled by me!"
"Nay," said the *Present,* "cease your claims;
What are ye both but sounding names?
All things achieved beneath the sun,
And all on earth that shall be done,
Are mine alone!—o'er great and small
The *Present* still is king of all!"

ACCESSION OF PETER THE GREAT TO THE CROWN OF RUSSIA.

The widow of Alexis and her family, the Narishkins, attempted to set aside the succession of Feodor and Ivan, the issue of his first marriage, in favor of Peter, the son of the second one, then a mere infant, not quite four years old. But the time was not yet ripe for such a change; the attempt failed, and Feodor ascended the throne. Although physically weak, he gave proof of great talents for government.

The most important duty bequeathed by Alexis to his successor was the conduct of the war against Turkey for the territory of the Cossacks, which the Sultan claimed.

In three years from the date of his accession, Feodor concluded a truce for twenty years with the enemy, and obtained the long disputed sovereignty over that warlike race. It has never since been seriously disputed. Feodor owed this triumph to the military genius of his minister, Vassili Galitzin.

The principal claim of the youthful monarch to the gratitude of his subjects lay in his minute attention to domestic affairs. He rooted out many of the corruptions which, through long ages of confusion and misrule, had crept into the judicial and municipal establishments. The judges notoriously sold their verdicts to the highest bidder. No poor man could obtain justice, nor even a rich one, unless willing to pay handsomely for it.

He accomplished a still more difficult task in taming the absurd pride of his nobility. One of the greatest difficulties of the government arose from their family pride. No nobleman, no matter how inferior his talents, would consent to occupy a post subordinate in position to another noble whose genealogy was or had been at any time inferior to his own.

At Moscow there was a public register of these family pedigrees carefully kept. Feodor issued a decree commanding all noble families to deliver into court faithful transcripts of these deeds, that they might be officially corrected in many important points. Having obtained them, he called a convocation of the clergy and great men of the empire, and after obtaining their sanction—a task of no slight difficulty—caused the records to be burnt in the court-yard of the palace.

To prove to his jealous nobles that he had no intention to deprive them of their honors, Feodor caused a new set of books to be prepared, in which their titles and privileges were written, but the ridiculous assumption of priority to office from antiquity of family was abolished forever.

He next displayed his firmness of character by espousing a Polish lady whom he passionately loved, paying no heed to the remonstrances of the Patriarch and clergy.

Feodor died in 1682 without issue, and the crown devolved upon his brother Ivan, who was nearly blind. Shortly before his death the Czar had expressed a wish that his half-brother Peter should be crowned with Ivan, who had just sufficient sense to perceive the wisdom of such an arrangement; and Peter, at the age of nine, would undoubtedly have reigned, but for the ambition and talents of the Princess Sophia, who obtained the aid of the Strelitz, a body of fourteen thousand men, ready at any moment to deluge the capital in blood. This formidable legion, established by Ivan the Terrible, had originally been named the Opritshnina, and was supposed to be composed of noblemen. They acted as body-guard to the Czar, assassinated his enemies, performed the duty of spies, and disarmed conspirators, whose possessions they succeeded to. No wonder they became a source of terror to the nation. This extraordinary institution laid the foundation of the first regular standing army of Russia.

Strong in her new allies, Sophia determined on the destruction of the Narishkins, the advocates of their relative, Peter. Breaking into the palace of the Czars, they murdered two brothers of the widow of Alexis, and put sixty members of her family to death, with the most cruel tortures. But fortunately for the future greatness of Russia, the chief victim escaped their fury. The Czarina fled from Moscow with her son, whom, it is stated, she carried in her arms. But the blood-hounds were upon her track. In her despair the heroic mother rushed into the convent of the Trinity, and had just time to place the youthful Peter upon the altar, when two of the Strelitz entered the church. One of them seized the Prince, and was on the point of beheading him, when the sound of approaching horsemen was heard. Believing them to be friends of the fugitives, the intended murderers fled, and Peter the Great was preserved to Russia.

When Czar, bitterly did he avenge the indignities offered to himself and his widowed mother.

The decided action of the Strelitz caused an immediate recognition of the claims of Ivan to the throne; but that unfortunate Prince, conscious of his want of ability to govern, entreated his counsellors to allow his half-brother, Peter, to be associated with him in the empire. This request, which Sophia dared not openly oppose, for fear of betraying her ambitious designs too soon, was acceded to, and Ivan and Peter were crowned on the sixth of May, 1681, Sophia being declared Regent.

Possessed of supreme power, this daring woman, to destroy, as she trusted, all prospects of Peter's succession, caused her brother to marry a lady of the house of Soltikof, in the hope of his having issue. Her next step was far less justifiable: she banished the youthful Prince, whose genius, even at that early age, she appears to have divined, to an obscure village, and surrounded him with dissolute companions, in the hope of corrupting his heart and mind. In this wicked attempt she only partially succeeded. His habits and temper became brutal, but the intellect of the future regenerator of his country remained clear.

Menzies, a learned Scotchman, who, according to Bassville, had been appointed tutor to the Prince, was removed for refusing to second the infamous design.

Meanwhile Sophia found herself becoming the slave of the Strelitz; there appeared no end to their exactions. Kovanskai, their commander, demanded that the Regent should marry one of her sisters to his son. The Princess haughtily refused, and the troops broke out into revolt.

Sophia and Ivan fled to the monastery of the Trinity for protection. The building being strongly fortified, they remained there in comparative safety. Troops were collected, and the Strelitz became disheartened and fled. The ringleaders were beheaded.

Meanwhile Peter did not remain idle. He formed his companions into a corps of mimic soldiers, entered the ranks as a drummer, and when fully qualified, rose to the rank of commander. In this enterprise he appears to have been greatly assisted by Lefort, a native of Geneva, a man of considerable genius, whom he ever afterward retained in his service.

The court at Moscow laughed at these puerile attempts.

At the age of seventeen, Peter married a lady named Lapucher, in 1689.

This time the Regent really felt alarmed. The people began to talk of the banished Prince, and she resolved on the assassination of Peter, and dispatched six hundred of the Strelitz as the instruments of her crime; but the future Czar had called his friends to his aid, and in the strongly fortified monastery of the Trinity awaited their approach. The assassins fled, and the forces of the persecuted Peter gradually increased, till at last he felt himself strong enough to defy the Regent, who set out in the vain hope of personally conciliating him. But acting under the advice of Lefort, he refused to see her.

The whole nation now sided with the young Czar. The commander of the Strelitz beheaded, and Galitzin, the obnoxious minister, banished, Sophia was compelled to shave her head and retire to a monastery.

Peter was now sole sovereign of Russia; for, although his half-brother Ivan lived to 1696, he was only nominally associated in the government.

On the 11th of September, 1689, the Czar issued a proclamation in which he commanded that the name of the Regent should no longer be mentioned in any public acts, and that her image should be struck from the coinage.

All her friends and favorites were dismissed from the Kremlin, the ancient palace at Moscow.

After establishing a standing army, officered chiefly by foreigners, Peter resolved to travel, to improve himself; but before he could set forth on his journey, the Strelitz, encouraged by the discontent created by his innovations, conspired once more against him. Their plan was to set fire to the city in several parts, and when the Czar, as was the custom in Russia, should show himself in the streets to superintend the extinction of the flames, to take his life, release the Princess Sophia from the convent, and place her upon the throne. The meeting of the conspirators was held in the house of Sukanin, one of the leaders of the Strelitz. Peter resolved to attend it, and after sending a written order to the captain of his guard to surround the building at ten o'clock, set forward alone.

By mistake he wrote eleven o'clock, and the error nearly cost him his life. Fortunately a great banquet had been prepared, and the traitors had indulged freely in wine and brandy. This delayed the proceedings a considerable time. At last one of the chiefs asked Sukanin:

"Brother, is it time?"

The Czar, who heard the guard approaching, struck the speaker to his feet, at the same instant exclaiming:

"Not yet, villain, for you! but it is for me."

The next instant his soldiers rushed in, and the conspirators fell trembling upon their knees, imploring in the most abject terms for mercy. But the hour of mercy for his cruel and constant enemies had long since past. Peter commanded them to be loaded with chains; then turning to the commander of his guard, smote him on the cheek, reproaching him for the delay.

The officer produced the order, in which eleven had been written instead of ten. The monarch perceived his error, embraced the insulted man, then kissed him on the cheek, and committed the prisoners to his charge.

This was the first outbreak against his authority, and Peter resolved to take a terrible revenge. He had many outrages and wrongs to settle for. He first condemned the culprits to the rack, then ordered them to be slowly mutilated, and finally put to death. When the last act of punishment was accomplished, he caused their heads to be placed on the summit of a column, which was surrounded by their limbs in revolting regularity—a fearful warning and example to all.

As we have neither the space nor intention of writing a life of Peter the Great, we shall pass over the incidents of his foreign travel, during which his old enemies conspired a second time to place Sophia upon the throne, but were defeated by General Gordon, who commanded the army of the Czar, before whose arrival in Moscow the rebellion had taken place, and numbers of prisoners in the dungeons of the city were awaiting their doom.

The vengeance of Peter on the Strelitz was revolting. He spared no cruelties that could prolong their agonies. After a variety of tortures, he commanded two thousand of the mangled wretches to be put to death, compelling his nobles to assist him in cutting off the heads of the guilty leaders. Seated upon his throne, he drank twenty successive draughts of brandy, and struck off as many heads with his own hand, each one at a single blow.

M. Printz, the Ambassador of Prussia, who was present at this scene of horror, has left a vivid description of it. It is asserted that he invited his Excellency to try his skill upon the victims, but the offer was politely declined.

Voltaire evidently gave credit to the story, but suppressed it.

Levesque and Count Segur adopt the statement of the Prussian Ambassador, which appears entitled to full belief.

Such were the fruits of the ambitious Sophia's attempts to corrupt the youth of the Czar. They left him an intellectual monster, with one solitary virtue—a love of country and a passionate desire for its greatness.

The Good Old Customs of our Grandmothers.

Wealth is likely, all else being equal, to make one happier. Fashion, on the contrary, rather reduces the probability of enjoyment, especially when the fashionable person is not rich. To ape the habits, dress and style of living of persons who spend the sum of your whole income on trifles that they scarcely count, is to show symptoms of insanity. Yet many people do this very thing, and are constantly in debt and in trouble in consequence. But even setting aside money matters, how does fashion help us to be happy? In the days of our grandmothers, Americans were in the main a plain and unconventional people, and were blessed by a far greater spirit of contentment, and enjoyed the interchange of social intercourse as we do not enjoy it now. People then paid visits that were worth something. Women became acquainted with each other, in the pleasant afternoons which they spent together, and to which no one was ashamed to bring either sewing or baby. I suppose any of us who are full-grown women can remember being childish members of a tea drinking such as we never think of giving or of going to ourselves—those pleasant meetings which gave no trouble to any one. No one wore full dress; no one expected any great ceremony.

Husbands and beaux came in with the tea-pot, or later, to do escort duty, and everybody seemed to be in good spirits. Before we were grown up, all this had vanished from "good society." Morning calls were in fashion. People dressed in their best, and came in their carriage, if possible. A dab of the hand in a tight kid glove, a word about the weather, a "*do* come and see me soon," and the caller is off. How much better were the simple, hearty, cheery manners and customs of our grandmothers! M. K. D.

"WELCOME, LITTLE STRANGER."

BY A DISPLACED THREE-YEAR-OLD.

Mozzer bought a baby,
'Ittle bitsy sing;
Sink I mos could put him
Frou my rubber ring.
An't he awful ugly?
An't he awful pink?
"Just come down from Heaven,"
Tat 's a fib, I sink.

Doctor told anozzer
Great big awful lie:
Nose an't out of joint zen,
Tat an't why I cry.
Mamma stays up bedroom—
Guess he makes her sick;
Frow him in ze gutter,
If I can, right quick.

Cuddle him and love him!
Call him "Bressed sing!"
Don't care if my kite an't
Got a bit of string!
Send me off with Biddy
Every single day,
"Be a good boy, Charlie;
Run away and play."

"Sink I ought to love him!"
No, I won't; so zere!
Nassy crying Baby,
Not got any hair.
Got all my nice kisses,
Got my place in bed;
Mean to take my drum-stick,
And crack him on the head!

MARK HEBER'S LUCK;

OR,

Life on the Plains.

By LEON LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOY MAGICIAN," "RED KNIFE," "THE BROKEN HOME," "EDDY'S SEARCH," "THE CLUB-FOOT BEAR," ETC., ETC.

[We here give a synopsis of that part of this story which has been already published, so that *new* readers of the *Ledger* can begin with this number, and understand the story just the same as though they had read it all from the beginning. Mark Heber, the hero, had gone from Western New York to Nebraska. He was a farmer's son. His father and mother were dead, and his only companion was an adopted sister, Gabrielle, who was familiarly called Gay. Mark was eighteen years old, and Gay was fourteen. They had fortunately made the acquaintance, and been taken under the protection of an old frontier farmer named Whitman, who, with several other families, founded a settlement in Nebraska, and built a stockade around their dwellings to keep off the Indians. Gay was bright, intelligent, handsome and a general favorite in the new settlement. She had been brought, when an infant, to the house of Mark's father, by her mother, who was evidently a lady, but out of her mind. The family name of this poor creature the Hebers were never able to learn. She constantly talked of a man whom she dreaded, and who had murdered her son, and who wanted to murder her and her infant daughter. She died when Gay was still young, and left her some valuable jewelry, among which was a magnificent diamond cross. These treasures Gay had kept; and as she grew older, and heard her mother's sad story, she believed the jewels would some time or other give her a clue to her parentage. This belief was confirmed while she was on her way with the emigrant train to Nebraska. The train was joined by a man in uniform, who gave his name as Lieutenant Fallon, of the United States Army, but who was in fact a noted robber and cut-throat of the plains, known as Blue Jack. This man, on seeing Gay Heber, seemed to be utterly overcome, tried to ferret out her history, and finally, with the aid of a ruffian named Burk, attempted to steal the box containing her jewels, which he told Burk were of priceless importance to him. But they were detected by Mark Heber, just as Burk had got Gay's jewel box out of her trunk, and a fierce fight was imminent between Mark and the pretended Lieutenant Fallon, when a body of U. S. dragoons charged into the camp, upon which Blue Jack sprang upon his horse and dashed away, with the dragoons in pursuit. The emigrants then learned, from a remark made by the commander of the dragoons, that the supposed lieutenant was the noted and dreaded Blue Jack himself, and Gay Heber felt assured that he was her own father, who had murdered her little brother, and wanted also to murder her mother and herself, for some nefarious purpose. It was this encounter with Blue Jack, who was in league with the Indian tribes, among whom he was known as the Devil Chief, that made the little band of emigrants hasten to build their stockade, as they felt certain that he would not hesitate to commit any atrocity to get possession of Gay Heber and her jewels. They were talking about this very thing, when a boy, who had been playing upon the platform inside the stockade came in, gasping the word, "*Indians!*" The men rushed out, seized their arms from their dwellings, and hastened to the platform, peeping out with eager eyes upon the plain. They beheld, some three miles distant, a band of mounted Indians riding toward the settlement at full speed. Whitman's field glass showed them to be in war paint and feathers—the incarnation of savage butchery. But a point of still keener interest was discovered a minute later. Midway between the fort and the approaching savages, a man was coming upon horseback, flying with the speed of despair, his face turned toward the fort, his arms outstretched in an anguished pleading. "Pursued by the red demons!" cried Whitman. "And they're gaining on him! Lord help him!" Who this white man was, and what his designs were, are unfolded in the following chapters.]

CHAPTER XI.

ANOTHER DANGEROUS ACQUAINTANCE.

The sympathies of the settlers were terribly excited in behalf of the white fugitive, as, leaning forward in his saddle and straining every nerve, he urged his horse onward toward the new settlement.

In their excitement and sympathy for him, they forgot for a moment the peril that menaced the little fort from his pursuers.

The women and children gathered under the platform close to the stockade, and the men and boys above informed them of the fugitive's progress as he neared them.

Gay Heber climbed up to the platform at Mark's heels, and peeped out through one of the loop-holes.

"There are a dozen of the painted devils!" cried Whitman, looking through his field-glass. "They are Sioux, and their paint and feathers show them to be on the war path. They are doing their best to overtake the white man. They gain on him."

A cry came up from the women and children below.

"The fugitive's horse is tired and covered with foam," said Whitman, a moment later. "It has been a long chase. The beast may not hold out—he staggers—on he comes! Once under cover of our rifles, the man is safe. Knox and Halsey, go below and swing open the great gate, that he may ride in in safety. We'll protect the gate with our rifles. Men, be ready to fire at the word."

Knox and Halsey hastily descended to the ground and unbarred the gate, swinging it open on its stout hinges.

The men on the platform above made ready to fire.

A few women peeped out at the open gate.

The fugitive was nearing the fort. The Indians, evidently in awe of the formidable stockade, or suspecting the presence of rifles behind the frowning black loop-holes, began to slacken their speed.

"They'll think twice about attacking us," said Mark Heber. "There are but a dozen of the savages. They do not know our number; but two men in this fort could keep twenty Indians at bay. They won't come under the fire of our rifles."

The event proved Mark's words. The Indians came to an uneasy halt just out of rifle range from the fort, and sent a dozen bullets toward the fugitive. The shots went wide of the mark, and the white man rode into the cover of the stockade, and approached the gate, his horse slackening his speed.

"Just give the savages a hint to keep off," said Whitman. "It will be ammunition well spent."

A dozen rifles discharged their deadly rain through the port-holes. The savages, apparently dismayed at this prompt reception, retreated a few yards further, and came again to a halt.

The white fugitive rode over the little draw-bridge, and into the fort in safety.

The gates were hastily shut and barred.

"The red-skins mean to parley among themselves," said Whitman. "Hopkins and Arnold can keep a look-out and warn the rest of us of the enemy's movements. I know they won't attack us by daylight, if they attack us at all."

Laying his rifle down upon the platform, he descended the ladder to the ground.

All except Hopkins and Arnold followed him.

They found that the fugitive had dismounted, and had flung himself upon the ground, gasping for breath. The women were bringing water to him, chafing his hands, and speaking to him words of kindness and sympathy.

Whitman pushed through the group, and looked down upon the rescued fugitive.

The latter encountered his glance, and arose with some difficulty to a sitting position.

He was a man in the prime of life, tall, vigorous and athletic, of the rude type of the western borderer. His garb was a mixture of savage and civilized costumes. He wore a deerskin frock over trowsers, Mexican boots of the finest workmanship, coming to his knees, and ornamented at the top with tassels, and a Mexican sombrero, which had, however, now fallen back upon the ground.

His face was overgrown with a bristling black beard. His forehead was low, his eyes small and furtive in their regards. His evident fatigue and the peril he had so narrowly escaped prevented any unfavorable comment upon his appearance in the minds of the settlers.

"You look tired out," said Whitman abruptly. "How long a chase did you give the red-skins?"

"About ten miles," said the escaped fugitive, still panting. "I was at the Loup Creek, ten miles to the northward, and had stopped to water, when the savages came out upon me from a thicket of trees not half a mile away. I leaped into my saddle, and put spurs to my horse. I meant to strike this road, in the hope of encountering an emigrant train. I little dreamed of finding a fort at the junction. I owe you and your garrison my life."

"What is your name?" asked Whitman.

"Pringle—Isaac Pringle, sir. I've got a



MR. PRINGLE A GUEST AT MR. WHITMAN'S RESIDENCE.

ranche on the Loup twenty miles to the north-west, and I am on my way to Fort McPherson to meet a wagon train in which I expect to find my brother. He's coming on from the East to join me."

Whitman stepped back and looked up at the platform.

"How about the savages, Arnold?" he demanded.

"They are dismounting," cried Arnold. "They are going to camp where they are, I think. They must intend to spend the night in sight of our fort."

"Most likely they mean to attack us in the night," responded Whitman grimly. "I am glad we have got old Swivel. We'll mount him on the platform, and let him speak to the Sioux when the time comes. I'll warrant his talk will satisfy them."

"You seem well armed and well manned here," said the stranger, arising to his feet and looking around him sharply.

"We are," said Mark Heber quietly. "We have a swivel gun and fifteen rifles, besides twenty revolvers, for close work. We have taken possession of this region, and we mean to keep it. Fifty Indians could not make any impression upon our defences."

"Yes, I see," said the stranger. "I wish my ranche was as well protected. You've settled out here in the right way. Nothing like beginning right."

He moved forward, but staggered as with weariness.

"Come to my house," said Whitman hospitably. "My wife will give you a drop of brandy to set you up again."

Mr. Pringle followed his guide to his home, nearly the whole population following.

The log-house of Mr. Whitman was as neat as hands could make it. It was next to the home of the Hebers, and was much larger. The roof projected to form a wide porch, in which the family could sit during the warm season and receive the benefit of all the cool west winds. From the porch a door opened into a roomy kitchen, with capacious hearth, a broad wooden mantel-shelf, a rude dresser filled with dishes, and a home-made lounge and table.

The walls were covered with old newspapers pasted carefully on, and the boys and girls of the house had pasted on the paper pictures cut from pictorial papers.

Upon one side of the room were two small bed-rooms. Upon the other side was a large pantry, a scullery, and a staircase that led up to the low loft where the boys were to sleep.

Mr. Pringle sat down upon the porch step, and his sharp glances strayed into the interior, marking its accommodations and the position of every door.

"Your house is very like mine, Mrs. Whitman," he said, as that lady brought out a cup of hot brandy and water to him. "Thank you for your kindness, Madam. I hope that some day you will come up to Missouri Ranche—that's my place—and allow my wife and me to show you our hospitality."

"Have you any children?" asked Mrs. Whitman, in a tone of interest.

"Oh, yes, ma'am, a dozen of 'em," said Mr. Pringle fluently. "It was on their account I came west. Couldn't make a living for 'em east."

The stranger drank his brandy nearly at one gulp, and seemed to feel a return of much of his usual strength, although he still exhibited signs of fatigue.

The crowd that had followed Mr. Pringle to Whitman's door now separated, the boys and some of the men returning toward the great gates and the sentinels, whose reports of the Indians they were again anxious to hear.

Mr. Whitman remained with his stranger guest.

The latter looked with a vailed and hidden scrutiny upon the group of women and children, as if he were seeking one particular face and form.

Suddenly, from behind the ample form of Mrs. Hopkins, a slender little figure came into view, with a little cropped head covered over with dusky locks, and a pair of big brown eyes illumining a saucy, delicate face. Of course the figure, eyes, and face belonged to young Gay Heber.

At sight of her Mr. Pringle caught his breath with sudden sharpness, and an odd gleam shot from his eyes.

It was for Gay Heber then that he had been looking!

He watched her a moment keenly, as if comparing her appearance with some picture or idea already graven upon his mind.

Then he said, with apparent indifference, but with great underlying eagerness:

"A lovely little girl that—the one with the shingled hair, sir. Is she your daughter?"

"No; I wish she was," said Mr. Whitman heartily. "She's the best little girl I ever saw, and that's saying a good deal, for my own girls are good little souls, if I do say it. No, sir. My name is Whitman. That young girl—she's fifteen or thereabouts—is named Heber."

The gleam in Mr. Pringle's eyes became a deep flash. He lowered his head to conceal it.

"Her father couldn't have thought much of her, or he wouldn't have brought her out here to endure the hardships of a pioneer's life," he said.

"She has neither father nor mother," replied Whitman. "She is out here with her brother, a brave young fellow of nineteen or twenty. He is one of our best men, and has a head which will make his name known far and wide some day. He's as cool and keen and sharp-witted as a man can be."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Pringle, with a slight shiver.

"Yes, sir. He can see as far through a mill-stone as anybody. As to the girl, she has been a perfect glow of sunshine in the camp since we left Leavenworth. She amuses the young folks with stories, and every boy and girl has got a book with pressed flowers in it, and there's been a scramble as to which should have the greatest variety of flowers. And she's got such an idea of making a home out here! You'd be surprised to know how ingenious and contriving she is. Look at that house next door, Mr. Pringle. That's her house."

Mr. Pringle looked, with ill-concealed eagerness.

At this moment Gay, who had heard nothing of the conversation, moved away toward the stockade.

"Do you see those vines under the windows already in training?" asked Mr. Whitman. "That house 'll be a perfect bower in a month. Inside it's as pretty as a picture. Young Heber bought a whole piece of chintz at Leavenworth, some forty or fifty yards. I thought it was a useless piece of extravagance at the time, but I'm willing to take a back seat now. The girl has made a perfect nest of the house. I was so pleased at the little creature's pluck and energy that I asked her to name the town. As she refused, I named it myself—with the general consent, of course—after her. It is called Heber. We were naming it when we were startled by your approach with the Indians at your back."

"I'd like to see the inside of her house," said Pringle, somewhat hurriedly. "My house is bare enough. If I could take back some idees to my old woman, I'd like to."

"Come with me," said Whitman, in his hearty tone and manner. "I'll show you the house. We have no city ways here, so we won't go to the stockade after Gay."

Mr. Whitman conducted his guest across the strip of prairie soil, and into the home of the Hebers.

Mr. Pringle was full of admiration of the outer room. He examined the wall hangings, the lounge, the windows, the heavy door, with its latch and simple bolt on the inner side, expressing his pleasure at beholding such a secure and comfortable little home.

"This is Miss Heber's room," said Whitman, opening the door of the inner room. "We won't go in there, but you can peep in."

Mr. Pringle did not appear to comprehend this hint, but passed Whitman, entering Gay's private room, and looking sharply around him.

He examined the bedstead, the ottoman, turning up the valance, and looking at the trunk beneath it, and walked up to the window and looked out. While thus intent upon the scene outside, his fingers ran lightly over the fastenings.

"It's all very nice," he said, coming out slowly. "But I don't care for such fixings. Give me a good floor and walls, a loop-hole to fire out of at the Injuns, and plenty of pork and potatoes, and I won't ask for these traps. Fact is, they'd be in my way. What I like is good sound boards and nothing to cover 'em."

"You are easily satisfied," said Whitman dryly, leading the way from the house. "Now when I saw the girl so cheerful and contented, making the most out of little, and fixing up a house that all the families will try to imitate, I said to myself, 'That girl is doing a bigger work than she knows of.' She'll make the whole village contented, and set us all to beautifying the wilderness, so that there'll be no pining nor homesickness. This will be home."

"Yes," said Pringle, "I dare say you are right, but any place is home to me. Now there's one thing here I do take an interest in, and that is, this here stockade. I'll have one like it, if it takes a year to build it. I'd like to study out how it's built, if you have no objections."

"None at all," said Whitman. "I'll show you around."

He did so, walking slowly, out of consideration to his guest's fatigue. He escorted him around the interior of the fort, pointing out the spot in the centre of the square where the block-house was to stand. The logs were lying about the square now.

"You won't need a block-house with that stockade," said Pringle.

"Perhaps not, but we all go for making things snug," said Mr. Whitman. "The block-house will serve as a public granary, in any case. Some day, when we get a railroad out here, if we ever do, and Nebraska becomes a State, we'll have our town-hall where the block-house is now to be built. We are going to dig a well in the block-house, and keep our stores there."

Pringle commended the precaution, even while pronouncing it unnecessary.

Mr. Whitman finally took his guest upon the platform, and the two looked out upon the plain.

The Indians had camped at a safe distance from the fort, had picketed their horses, and were holding a council.

"They can't give up my scalp so easily," said Pringle. "They wouldn't fool around this region if they knew the strength of the fort."

Mark Heber drew near.

"I don't believe the fellows mean to attack us," he said. "Still, they may try it to-night. I hope they will, Mr. Whitman. They will carry back such a tale to their people as will frighten the whole Sioux nation from ever coming near us."

"This is Mark Heber, Mr. Pringle," said Whitman. "I've been telling Mr. Pringle something about you, Mark," continued the old farmer. "He took a great fancy at first sight, as every one does, to your sister, and I took the liberty to show him the inside of your house."

Mr. Pringle extended his hand to Mark in true western fashion. Mark yielded his own hand to the pressure, but withdrew it hastily, with a sense of repulsion he could not overcome nor analyze.

"Shall you remain with us, Mr. Pringle," he asked, "until the train you came to meet comes up, or shall you go on in the morning to Fort McPherson?"

"You are on the exact route of wagon trains," said Pringle, "and I may wait here. If my brother does not find me at McPherson, he'd be likely to come on with the train, I should think. I don't intend to run the risk of meeting the red-skins, or being chased by them from here to the fort. I can decide what I'll do in the morning, and in the mean time, if you'll allow me, I'll sleep on the ground in your square, where my horse is grazing now."

It was so settled. The hour was now sunset, and the west was glowing with richer hues than even those that make up the famed Italian sunsets. The men on the platform continued to look out of the loop-holes and watch the Indians through their glasses, as they squatted in a circle on the ground over half a mile away, to the westward, absorbed in grave council.

The women went into their houses and proceeded to cook their evening meal.

Gay filled her tea-kettle from the river, there being a small door in the stockade on that side, and the other women followed her example.

Mr. Pringle, from the platform at some distance, watched the girl as she went out and came in at the small door, but he said nothing.

Mark Heber's gaze carelessly strayed after that of Pringle, but he also was silent.

The Whitmans' dinner-horn was a general summons to supper. Two men were left on guard, and the rest hurried to their homes. Whitman invited Pringle home with him, and the invitation was accepted.

Gay's supper consisted of corn cake hot from the fire, steaming coffee, salt pork broiled in thin slices upon coals, and boiled rice with milk and sugar, and Mark did full justice to it.

After the meal, Mark went out to milk the cow, and Gay put her kitchen in order. The cow had had a rude shed built for her behind the house, and she was snugly shut up there for the night. When Mark came in with the brimming pail, he said:

"I am to be on guard to-night, Gay, and I want you to fasten the house up securely."

Gay looked up in surprise.

"I've taken a dislike to that Pringle," continued Mark gravely. "I dare say I am foolish and unreasonable, but then I don't care to go against my impressions, Gay. Lock the house up, and don't open it unless I ask for admittance."

"As if that poor man, who has just escaped with his life from the savages, would harm his protectors!" cried Gay. "You are nervous, Mark. You see a spook in every log, and an enemy in every stone, since that affair of Blue Jack, a long way back."

"It may be," answered Mark. "We haven't seen the last of Blue Jack yet, Gay. He is a desperate villain, almost infinite in his evil resources, and wicked beyond comparison. I utterly reject your suspicion that he is your father. Can a thorn-tree bring forth figs?"

Gay turned pale, as she answered:

"The suspicion grows upon me, Mark, until at times it is almost certainty. Why was he so agitated at seeing me? Why did he ask if I were your sister? Why did he try to steal from me my few trinkets, which are all that are left to me of my mother? Why did my name affect him so strangely? Why did I feel such a terror whenever I saw him or felt his gaze? Why did I feel such a singular dread of him? such a dread as I cannot describe, and do not understand? I believe, so surely as I live, that his blood flows in my veins. I believe that he is the 'Edmund' whom my mother accused of killing my young brother, and from whom she fled insane! I believe, O Mark, dear Mark, I believe that he is my father!"

"It may be," said Mark. "His ca[...]n the plains dates back only some ten years. Remorse may have driven him wild. He was a bad man when your mother fled from him, and he has gone swiftly down the steep road to ruin. People seldom stop when they are once fairly started on that road. He may be your father, Gay, but I would almost sooner see you in the hands of ruthless savages than in his hands. I will guard you from him with my life. And now I must go, darling. Remember to keep the door locked."

He kissed her, and went out to his duties.

Gay sat upon the low door-step in the twilight, and her mind became busy with the mystery of her young life.

CHAPTER XII.

LIVELY TIMES AGAIN!

The evening closed softly down upon the infinite plains, with brooding shadows which deepened into darkness. There was no moonlight, and the stars were hidden behind clouds that threatened storm. The prairie wind raced over the vast level, growing fiercer with every mile of unchecked travel, and beat against the stockade, and whistled through the pickets at its top, and careered within the fort, and then dashed onward, over the murmuring river and away to the far east, bearing desolation on its wings.

Every light was extinguished early in the houses. Nearly every man in the settlement was out upon the platform of the stockade, armed, and peering out into the darkness through the loop-holes in the wall.

It was a night of all others for an Indian attack. The fierce beating of the wind, with its sullen roar, drowned all lesser sounds. Vigilant eyes and ears were needed to prevent surprise.

Upon the western side of the stockade, that nearest the encamped savages, Mark Heber, Mr. Whitman, Knox, Halsey, Whitman's son, Arnold's two sons, brave fellows of nineteen and twenty-one, were stationed.

This was the side upon which an attack, if any were made, was to be expected.

Yet, as it behooved a general to guard all sides of a fort, and as the savages might divide their forces and attack two sides at once, Hopkins and his son, and Brown and his two sons were stationed upon the northern side.

There remained Amory and his two sons. They were appointed to guard the south-east portion of the fort, and to guard against a surprise, which was highly improbable, from the water-side.

But while every precaution was thus taken against the savages outside, no one dreamed of treachery within.

The cattle browsed upon the buffalo grass within the stockade, or lay down to sleep. Not a creature within the inclosure was astir.

The women hushed their children to sleep, and lay down to slumber with them, confiding themselves to the care of Providence, and to the guardianship of the stout husbands and brothers on the walls. Only one door in the settlement was locked, and that door belonged to the Heber cabin.

The stranger, who had been so generously and kindly received by the settlers, removed his saddle-bags from his horse, took a blanket from under them, wrapped himself in his blanket, and using his saddle-bags for a pillow, lay down in the public square between two piles of logs.

About ten o'clock an uneasy sensation came over Mark Heber. He had been appointed chief aid to Mr. Whitman, and had a certain liberty of movement allowed him. He quitted his post softly, and stole to his cabin door. It was bolted on the inner side. He listened, but heard no sound within. He crept around to Gay's window. The shade was drawn up, and the window was unshuttered, but the darkness inside was too intensely black to permit him to distinguish any object.

"It's all right," said Mark to himself, smiling at his own uneasiness. "I am like some old hen that has hatched a duckling. Who would harm a pure, innocent little creature like Gay? I am foolish—yet I may as well go and take a look at Mr. Pringle."

He went around into the cow-shed where he had hung his lantern, and lighted it with matches from his pocket. He hurried to the square, and sought for the recumbent figure of Mr. Pringle.

He presently found it, between the two piles of logs. The man seemed sleeping profoundly. Mark threw the light of the lantern full upon his face, and he stirred uneasily. Then, with a deeper breath, Pringle turned upon his side, his face being now in shadow.

Mark contemplated him a few moments, and listened to his deep breathing. He was about to turn away when Pringle stirred uneasily again, yawned, and opened his light-gray eyes full upon our young hero.

Mark started back, a little confused.

"What's up?" cried Pringle breathlessly. "The Indians—"

"Are as they were before dark," said Mark. "There is no change in affairs. I was simply patrolling the inside of the fort, that's all, Mr. Pringle."

"And there's no alarm—no danger?"

"No more than there has been, as yet. I did not intend to wake you, Mr. Pringle. Yet now that I have done so," said Mark, "I'd like to ask you if you know Blue Jack, the desperado."

He threw the light full upon Mr. Pringle's face, but only surprise was expressed upon that bearded visage.

"I guess everybody out here has heard of Blue Jack," said Mr. Pringle; "but as to knowing him, that's another thing. I've seen the scoundrel though, and a more ill-favored fellow I never want to see. Do *you* know him?"

"I have met him," replied Mark. "Do you know where he is now?"

"I heard of him the other day," said Pringle. "A rancher, a neighbor of mine, five miles off, says he has gone up into Dakota along with a party of Sioux. He's got a Sioux wife."

"Those Indians who pursued you here, and who are now camped outside, are Sioux," said Mark. "Did you see a white man among them?"

"No, sir. The Devil Chief, as the Indians call Blue Jack, was not among them. His shot, they say, never misses. I tell you, Mr. Heber, I'd rather have all the Sioux after my scalp than to have Blue Jack get a hankering after it. I know of his scalping a white man once after the regular Indian fashion, for calling him Boot-Jack."

"I'm sorry I disturbed you, Mr. Pringle," said Mark. "I must go back to the stockade. Good-night."

He hurried away, thinking:

"The fellow's all right. He never moved a muscle when I mentioned Blue Jack's name. I am too suspicious. I certainly had no grounds for suspecting him to be a villain beyond that feeling of repugnance to him. He looks honest enough."

He had not gone ten yards when Mr. Isaac Pringle raised his head and looked after him with a peculiar smile.

"Suspicious, eh?" muttered Mr. Pringle. "Suspects that I'm an emissary of Blue Jack? Thought he'd keep an eye on me, it seems. That youth is too keen to live long!"

He listened keenly, assuring himself that Mark was returning to his post.

"He won't be back again in a hurry," he thought. "It's dark as pitch. The women and children are asleep. The men are all out on the walls. I'll take a look around. It is near the hour appointed."

He arose and prowled about the square, and came near to the walls in the darkness.

He could hear Mark Heber ascend the ladder to the platform, and the words that greeted Mark in Whitman's voice:

"Is that you, Heber?"

Mark replied in the affirmative.

"I think I see a movement in the Indian camp," said Whitman. "I seem to see black spots moving in the darkness, but the Indians are half a mile away, and I may be mistaken. My imagination is ready to see a moving In-

in every waving bush. The wind affects my sight as well as my hearing. I wish it were not so dark."

"I think the Indians are moving," said Mark, looking sharply through the port-hole upon the plain. "But, as you say, we can see nothing in this darkness at this distance. I do not expect an attack before midnight."

"We'll be ready for it at any moment," said Whitman.

The listener moved away softly, and stole across the square, approaching Heber's cabin. He tried the door; it was bolted. He tried the windows of the kitchen; they were fast. He went to Gay's window. It was fastened down with a nail, and refused to yield to his touch.

Nothing daunted, he went around to the pantry window. That was also secured with a nail; but the window gave a little as he pushed it upward. The villain at once comprehended that the nail was smaller than the gimlet hole it occupied, and he seized the lower sash and worked it gently up and down for some minutes, thus working the nail loose.

In a short time, to his great satisfaction, the nail fell out of its socket, rattling upon the pantry floor.

The sound did not arouse the young mistress of the house. Pringle waited a little to assure himself of that fact, and then gently pushed up the sash. He was a large man, though not so large as Blue Jack, and the aperture was small, yet he managed to squeeze his person through it and to enter the pantry.

He shut down the window and pulled off his boots. He produced from his person a small pocket lantern and lighted it, turning the slide so that the merest ray of light came from it.

Picking up his boots in one hand, he went out into the kitchen.

The fire had burned low, leaving only a few red embers on the hearth, and a faint glow pervaded the kitchen. Pringle's first glance was at the windows; they were shuttered.

He crossed the floor and softly entered Gay's room, hiding his light under his coat.

The girl was sleeping soundly. He drew forth his lantern, and saw by his light that the window was uncurtained, and that the feeble gleam of his lantern might be seen outside. He set down his boots at the door, and went softly to the window and closed the hinged shutter.

Then he returned to the centre of the room, and stood irresolute.

"The Cap'n said that the box was in the girl's trunk," he mused. "Here's her trunk. Now for the box."

So far Gay had not stirred. He approached the trunk, and pulled off its chintz cover. It was the same sheepskin-covered receptacle which Burk had once tried to rob, but with ill-success.

The intruder drew from his pocket a bunch of skeleton keys, and fitted one to the trunk lock. The bolt snapped back with a crisp sound.

He started and looked toward the bed. Gay slumbered like a little child.

He pushed up the trunk lid. The deep tray was full of under garments, collars, ribbons, and the smaller effects belonging to Gay's simple wardrobe. He lifted these, and found under them the little walnut box in which Gay had kept her few treasures left her by her mother ever since she could remember.

This box was locked, and the intruder had no key small enough to unlock it. It was small and nearly square, simply made, but Pringle's eyes lighted up as he beheld it, and seized it in both his hands.

"That's the very box the Cap'n described," he mused. "Walnut, six inches long by four and a half wide. He said I was not to open it. I wonder what's in it."

He rattled the box slightly. A metallic clink came from within, as some small articles rattled all together against the inner side of the box.

"Jewelry," he muttered, recognizing the sound. "What jewelry can a settler's girl, poor as Job, have to set the Cap'n crazy to get hold of it? I s'pose he knows what he's about. I've obeyed orders, any how, and Blue Jack is outside waiting for the box. It must be about the time he set for me to finish the job."

He looked at his big silver watch. The hands indicated five minutes before eleven.

"In five minutes," he said to himself, "I must get off. The Indians are to make an attack, and I'm to get off under cover of the noise and confusion. I think I can manage it."

He put the box in an inner pocket of his coat, buttoned the garment, and arose, lantern in hand, his eyes involuntarily turning toward the bed.

To his utter consternation, Gay sat upright in the bed, her wide eyes fixed upon him.

He uttered an exclamation of terror.

"Is that you, Mr. Pringle?" cried Gay, her eyes glowing like stars from out the whiteness of her face. "What are you doing in our house, in my room—at this hour? Where is Mark?"

Pringle recovered himself by a strong effort.

"Your brother is out on the wall, Miss Heber," he said, "and you and I are alone in the house. I wanted something out of your trunk, and I've got it. If you raise an alarm I'll shoot you dead, though I've had no orders to harm you."

"Orders?" echoed Gay. "You were sent here then? Your flight from the Indians was all a sham? You are in league with them? You are sent here by Blue Jack?"

"You've got a keen head, Miss," said Pringle admiringly. "You've about guessed the situation. Now you just lie back on your pillow, and don't say a word. If you raise an alarm I'll kill you dead on the spot."

He meant what he said, and his grim face showed it.

Gay had not undressed that night. Her revolver was in her pocket, where she usually carried it, by Mark's wish, and she put her hand stealthily toward it.

"You'd better not," said the ruffian warningly. "I've heard about that pistol of yours. Better not show it. Give me your promise to lie still half an hour, and I'll leave you."

Gay was on the point of giving the promise when she heard a tapping at the house door, and Mark's voice called to her to know if she was safe.

That voice naturally distracted Pringle's attention.

With a bound like that of a leopardess, Gay sprang from her bed and flew into the outer room, uttering a shriek that was fairly appalling. She gained the house door, and drew back the bolt.

Mark leaped into the room, his eyes blazing.

In that same moment Pringle bounded forth from the inner room.

And yet in that same moment an awful tumult arose on the night air outside the stockade, the war whoops of the Sioux, as they attacked the fort!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Genius, Talent, Cleverness.

Genius rushes like a whirlwind. Talent marches like a cavalcade of heavy men and heavy horses. Cleverness skims like a swallow in a summer evening, with a sharp, shrill note and a sudden turning. The man of genius dwells with men and with nature; the man of talent, in his study; but the clever fellow dances here, there and everywhere, like a butterfly in a hurricane, striking everything and enjoying nothing, but too light to be dashed to pieces. The man of talent will attack theories; the clever man assails the individual and slanders private character; but the man of genius despises both; he heeds none, he fears none, he lives in himself, shrouded in the consciousness of his own strength; he interferes with none, and walks forth an example that "eagles fly alone—they are but sheep that herd together." It is true, that should a poisonous worm cross his path, he may tread it under foot; should a cur snarl at him, he may chastise it; but he will not, cannot, attack the privacy of another. Clever men write *verses*, men of talent write *prose*, but the man of genius writes *poetry*.

THE FAG-END OF A CRUISE.

BY R. W. NEWMAN.

"There's a boat under our lee, sir; wants to come on board, I think," said our first officer, coming down the companion-way and popping his head into the cabin, where we were sitting after dinner, cracking midshipman's nuts and sipping brandy and water.

"I'll be on deck in a minute, Mr. Locke," answered Captain Lee. And we all hurried on our overcoats, and went on deck also.

It was a cold, drizzling rain storm, with a fog hanging over the water. We were on a bowline, going up Channel, at the end of a long voyage across the Atlantic.

The captain was looking at the boat through his glass, as he stood out to the seaward of us. He closed the glass as he turned to his first officer, and said:

"He has tacked, I see. Man the main braces, and have a hand in the fore-chains to heave him a line; back your main-yard, and get him on board. I'll be on deck again presently. Now, gentlemen," turning to us, "this fellow will sell you some fish for supper."

And he went below, where, with chart and compasses, he was busy with his reckoning.

"Yes," he said, "there we are, sure," marking in pencil the spot. "With this breeze, we must be abreast the Start Point by the morning."

When the captain came on deck we were talking to the two men who had come on board.

We bought a mess of fish of them, and were anxious for the captain to see them.

"Well, my men," said the captain, "where are we?"

"Running ashore, sir, as fast as you can."

"Running to the devil!" said he. "Are not you Plymouth men?"

"We left the Scillys this morning, sir; and if you stand on, the way you be doing now, sir, you'll be ashore in two hours; that's all, sir."

"We don't want a pilot now, my men; we'll get one of the Start Point pilots in the morning. We are bound to London, or I mean to call into Dartmouth Range for orders."

"You will never get there the way you be going," they grumbled out.

"Hurry into your boat, there! I am losing time talking here. I've seen you fellows before. I ought to know this Channel pretty well by this time."

They got into their boat and left us. The captain went below again, took out his chart and studied it. After a little while he came on deck again—pea-coat and south-wester on this time, and his glass under his arm.

"Mr. Locke," said he, as he passed forward, "up in the fore cross-trees, if you please, and have a bright look-out on the lee bow. Send a man in the fore-top too."

Saying which, he took his place on the forecastle, muttering to himself:

"These fellows may be right, after all, and we are on a lee shore with a gale of wind coming up."

We cabin passengers mustered round the captain, for we were all anxious, having heard more than he had from these men, and we were sorry to see that boat going out of sight.

We were all peering into the mist and fog, which the wind just kept above the water, when we heard a hail from aloft of "Land ho!"

"Where away?" responded the captain immediately.

"Broad on the lee bow, sir!"

He looked a moment, closed up his glass, told the second mate to hoist the signal for a pilot and take the quarter-deck, then sprang into the fore rigging, and was up in the top in a minute. The man there had made out nothing. Another minute, and he was in the cross-trees, where he made out the land—bold high land, with two apparent islands—and gave the glass to Mr. Locke, who confirmed his observation, and they came down.

"Forecastle! and watch that fellow, Locke," said he, and walked aft. "Is that boat out of sight?" he said to his second officer.

"No, sir."

"Does he answer our signal?"

"Not yet, sir."

And the captain watched the fellow with his glass, but he was drawing further away from us all the time. He rested his glass for a moment, and said to his second officer:

"Cast loose that gun, sir, and fire as quick as you can."

"Aye, aye, sir."

Bang she went. The boat took no notice.

"Fire again, sir."

Bang! The fellow heard us this time, tacked, and ran down to us, and we hoisted him in right gladly. No grumbling this time. We all felt relieved that he was on board.

The pilot walked the weather side of the quarter-deck with the captain for half an hour, in earnest conversation. Then they went below for a little while.

Meanwhile the wind freshened, and the weather looked nasty. The pilot said it would blow a powerful gale of wind to-night; it looked dirty, and better make port. There were sixty sail of vessels in St. Mary's now, waiting for a wind to get up Channel. By this time the land was well aboard of us, and we had taken in top-gallant sails. So we squared away, and ran into St. Mary's, where we found a fleet of vessels at anchor, as the pilot had told us, and we anchored about the middle of them, with an English frigate right ahead of us.

It was late in the afternoon of a short day by the time we were anchored, sails furled, and things generally put ship-shape. No shore boats came off to us, and it looked wild and blustering. So we gave up going on shore that night, and contented ourselves with taking our tea in comfort.

It is a murky, wild night—no moon, no stars out—and all hands are forward, doing something. They had noticed the men-of-war early in the evening getting their top-gallant yards down, housing the masts or sending them down on deck; and our men were doing the same thing. In other words, we were preparing for a bad night. Just as I got on deck I heard a hail from the ship of war ahead of us.

"*Dido*, ahoy!" the lieutenant in the hammock rails hailed. Our ship was the *Dido*.

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"Can I send you any assistance? How is your ground tackle? 'Twill blow great guns by and by. Barometer is running very low."

"Nothing," hailed our captain. "We want an anchor and chain."

"I thought you were dragging," hailed the lieutenant. "I'll try and send you one."

How the deuce can he do this? thought I, with this wind and sea on. Presently a flash of lightning revealed the stern and quarter frame of the ship to windward, and our captain saw enough to convince him that he would get his anchor and chain, for there were some fifty blue jackets tramping aft with an anchor. The lieutenant hailed again.

"I am going to send you a nun-buoy; look out for him, with a bight of a rope."

In the next flash of lightning we saw them throw him overboard from his larboard quarter. We lost him this time; he sheered off too far on our starboard bow. We could hear the orders given on the deck of the man-of-war, in the lulls of the wind, and they were sending us another.

"Look out, on board there," hailed the frigate.

We missed him again, though one of our fellows on the spritsail-yard arm nearly caught him.

"Try again, for God's sake," hailed our captain.

"Aye, aye, a dozen times," replied the lieutenant, with the courage that disappointment gives to the truly great, and three times we tried the same manœuvre unsuccessfully.

At length, the sixth time we caught him, and sent the lieutenant a cheer that told the story.

"Haul in the slack, on board there," hailed the lieutenant, "and we'll give you the chain."

In she came handsomely; then the chain came on board, when we cheered again. We had got on board several fathoms of chain, when the lieutenant cried, through his trumpet:

"Here you have your anchor;" then overboard she went. "Good-night; you'll need him; our glass is going down still."

"That's a brave fellow," said the captain. "Now, with three good anchors ahead, we can defy old David Jones, I think. Steward, come, *splice the main brace*."

And he walked aft to the cabin, and all were glad to see his handsome, cheery face there. He said it was a dirty night, but we were all right now. This brought us to nearly ten o'clock, and the passengers retired to their berths; the captain turning in too. And the watch were sent below.

I was restless, and went on deck to see the gale. It was my first, and I liked it. There was something very attractive to me in the wild, destructive scene before me. By this time the stars shone out bright and hopeful over the masses of black clouds that floated above my head; the ships pitching into it as they rode to their strained anchors, the spray and foam covering their decks, the lightning occasionally rendering them palpably visible, their crews gathered round the mainmast, or in twos at the main rigging.

Occasionally, too, a vessel would drag, and then bring up again. The night cleared. Oh, how glorious, to sit there watching the scene! How impotent, how helpless is man in contest with his Maker! It was eight bells on board the frigate, when suddenly it clouded up to windward. The weathermost ships dragged their anchors and came down upon us, but brought up out of all danger. The frigate felt it before we did, and came a little nearer to us. At this moment the mate passed down the companion-way, and called the captain, who came up and passed forward. This squall passed us; but one of the lee-most ships dragged her anchors, and went ashore about half a mile below, breaking up immediately; and we were too far off and too busy to see more of her. It made its impression, however. All felt that some one who stood in the same peril as ourselves had gone to that "bourne from whence no traveller returns."

All hands were called now. The steward was levied upon for bags, and stores of all kinds were emptied on the cabin floor, and a dozen or so handed forward. Our windlass was gone, and the men were busy wrapping these bags round the hemp cable, to jam in the hawse-holes. Then the chains were taken round the foremast, and all was well again for the present, while spray and sea foam blinded the men at work at them. The frigate was now well to windward. She and the shortness of the squall had saved us this time from the fate of other ships.

The booming of guns to leeward told of more storm work going on there, the result of the squall that had just passed; more souls going to their long rest; many, many on that sea to-night had seen their last sunrise.

In our cabin the scene was sad indeed. The passengers were at prayers around the cabin table, or waiting in their berths. All hope was banished, and despair reigned. It was at its worst, and everything was being done that was possible. I left them in their misery to take my chance on deck. In the companion-way I held on, and watched the scene. We were within a cable's length of the breakers, while the lightning revealed a crescent of white foam for miles each side of us, with here and there a ship in the midst of them, going to pieces.

At the moment a large bark snapped her chains, and drifted past. She struck, the masts fell over the side, and she stuck in the breakers. In a few moments all was over with her, and the cries of the people on board could be plainly heard in the lull of the gale. Two or three bodies floated out past us, but nothing could save them in such a storm.

The gale was, I think, now spent; a pitchy darkness seemed to fall over the scene. The wind was steadier, and we were sensibly reprieved. Soon I was confirmed in this idea by the captain coming aft and saying:

"That's the worst of it, thank God! It will be daylight in an hour."

And it was so. The day dawned, the sun rose murky and glum, as if in wonder at the transformation that had been wrought in his absence. The coast was strewn with wreck of ship and life; the sea with sea furniture, trunks and every imaginable article. A scene which one looks on only once in a lifetime.

I found my state-room occupied; so laid me down on the transom, and had a short but sound nap. I awoke and found breakfast on the table, which was not in great demand. I found a good cup of coffee, however, refreshing. Our good friend, the lieutenant, from the frigate, was on board examining our damages. He would send carpenters to replace our windlass, and was very kind. The first officer would get the ship in order, and we would sail the next day. So, at ten A. M., I jumped into the boat with the captain and a few passengers, to visit the wrecks and hear the news. We were to dine on shore; so the first thing was to see the effects of the gale.

It was the subject of all conversation, and every one that could be spared was perambulating the beach. We went to all the wrecks, for none were so utterly annihilated as not to leave some trace. There were in all twelve, I think, wrecked, with the loss of the greater number of their crews, in that fearful gale.

The first that we came to was an Irish vessel, with nothing left but her fore-castle and part of her lower hold, from which they were saving cargo that, as the tide receded, became procurable. The crew had all perished. There was no one left to tell her tale; and as we went along, we saw several bodies in the *debris* of the wreck on the shore.

Further on we found a vessel apparently entire, with all masts gone, and for her there seemed to be some hope. Some persons had come ashore from her alive, and some almost dead. They were piling her things together, and something like system prevailed, the dead being placed on some casks and covered with sails decently. People would come, look on them, and pass on.

A woman and child had been found early in the morning, they said, and had been taken to a house which they pointed out. They could not tell whether she had been saved or had died; she was too far gone, they said, for much hope.

They were still bringing up wrecked furniture and bodies from the wreck, when we were joined by another party, one of whom was a gentleman who had been a passenger in the ship.

He came, uncovered the dead one by one, and looked anxiously at them. Not finding some one for whom he was in search, he went down to the shore, and was recognized by the men as Captain Fortescue; but they could not answer his inquiries.

"No, sir," was all they said, and they looked sad, as though they sought some one too.

He returned and looked at the dead again.

Poor fellow! he was half dead himself; at least he looked so. While he was standing there, a little ragged boy, with shirt and trowsers on, with neither shoes nor hat, came up to him, and said:

"Maester, be you called Charley, sir?"

The man, with surprise and hope pictured in his face, looked at the boy and replied:

"My name is Charles Fortescue, captain in Her Majesty's service."

"Oh, then," said the little fellow, "you ban't he then."

"What is it, my little man?" said he, giving him a half-crown.

"Why," said the boy, "only this, sir: There was a woman and babby taken up to our house this morning, and she was so handsome-like that mother had her put in her own bed, and sent for the doctor, and had almost everything done for her. The babby, sir, soon got well, and she was crowing in the hands of two old women, our neighbors; but the lady, sir, was mad, they said, and was crying for Charley! Charley! when I comed away just now to look for him. But 'twasn't you, sir. That name you gived me wasn't nothing like it."

"Here's a guinea to take me to her," said the captain, with eye elate and impatience in his face.

"Come along, sir," said the little fellow, and ran ahead.

The captain ran too. The fire in his heart took away the shame. The youngster was ahead of him though, and he burst into the cottage with:

"I've fetched Charley to you, mum!"

The baby crowed in the old woman's arms, the dying lady in the other room heard it, started from her bed, and fell into her husband's arms at the door.

I have reason to know that the woman of that cottage was made comfortable for life, that that boy was educated, and stands, at present, a midshipman on the deck of a British man-of-war.

SAVED BY A WOMAN'S SMILE.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

It was at the sea-shore, the most fashionable resort of the time, that from one of the cottage windows floated out on the evening air a woman's voice. She was singing an old song—Kathleen Mavourneen. There was a world of passion in her tone, passion really felt, not affected, *one* was wild enough to believe, as, leaning over the instrument, he listened to her song. She had a wonderful voice; so full and powerful now, and again lulling one into a blissfull dream by its soft sweetness.

The song was finished. Both the words and music had penetrated the inmost soul of Cecil Delmar.

"Why did you sing that song, Florence?" he asked.

"Because it pleased me," she answered, raising her eyes to his, and smiling.

How beautiful she was! And her smile! Did ever woman smile as Florence Carrington? many have asked; such a bright, bewildering smile was hers.

"Florence, do you know your smile is the brightest that ever lingered on a woman's lips," Cecil said, gazing lovingly on her.

"So many have told me," she answered, with provoking carelessness.

"Aye, Florence, a smile which carries a man almost to Heaven when it is given him, or sinks him to the realms of despair, if turned on another. Florence, I never hear that song, 'Her bright smile haunts me still,' but I think of your smile, and feel as the poet must have felt. Yes, love, even in eye and heart it has lived, cheering, comforting, and bringing me back to you, ever constant and true—"

"There, there, Cecil; do stop! One would think you were rehearsing for a private theatrical," she said, turning again, and running her fingers over the keys of the instrument.

"Florence!"

"Cecil, please do not stare at me so; it is very impolite. I should have thought your travelling in Europe would have polished and changed you a little," she said.

"Changed! Florence, what do you mean?"

"I mean, Cecil, that three years might be expected to bring change to all. When you left home, I was a child, not knowing my own heart; and you—"

"A man, Florence, giving his heart with perfect faith to a girl he believed loving, constant and true," Cecil said, his voice trembling with emotion.

"Nonsense, Cecil! Ours was but a boy and girl affair, and years have—"

"Changed the artless, loving girl to a woman of the world, no longer content with the devotion of one heart. Florence, you are trying me; say it is so."

"No, Cecil; nothing of the kind. I am sorry to grieve you, but it will only be a passing cloud. And you will, perhaps, thank me for considering your future welfare. You have work to do for years yet, Cecil. Your fortune to retrieve, a name to make. And then you can think again of love. You wrong me when you say I am not content with the devotion of one heart. I am, and proud of it too. But it is the heart of one his country is proud of. And when so many fair women were sighing for what I have won, I should be content. See, Cecil."

She took from her pocket a little portrait, and handed it to him. It was the face of one Cecil had seen lingering long beside her the night before; one he had known by reputation for years; the popular bachelor of the time and place.

"Now, Cecil, I have acted candidly with you; can we not still be friends?"

He knew all then—knew she was lost to him—knew that the hopes of years were crushed—knew that the girl before him was false.

Aye, but knew not that more than to him was she false, false to the pleadings of her own heart. Ambition had conquered in the contest, and love was buried in the hidden recesses of her heart. The false girl vainly thought that in the brilliant future she would win, if not happiness, at least content, oblivion of the past.

The compressed lips parted; he was about to speak to her—to upbraid, or perchance with words of forgiveness to part. Whichever it might have been was checked by the sound of a coming step—a firm, commanding tread. Both knew it. A flush mantled her pale face. With a cold, bitter smile, Cecil Delmar turned away. Another instant, and she knew he had gone.

"False girl!" he said. "Will wealth and position make her happy? Yes—perhaps; for surely she has no heart for aught else. How I worshipped her, believing her loving and true! Well, the dream is over, and life has nothing more for me. Could my loss of fortune have made her fly from me? Ah, she might have known how I would have worked for wealth and fame to offer her! How inviting the water looks to-night! The wave seems calling me. I *will* go!"

Cecil, leaving Florence, had wandered beside the sea-shore. Certainly life seemed very dark to him then. He believed the mysterious Future could not be more so. Mounting the bridge, he determined from thence to plunge into the bosom of the ocean.

Although a late hour, many persons still lingered there. Cecil seated himself to wait their departure. At length all were gone save a party just opposite.

"Come, let us go," said one of them.

"No, no," answered a voice so peculiarly sweet that Cecil was drawn from his sad musings to listen.

"*Do* come, now, Louise. What are you stopping for?" again urged one.

"No, no; I want to stay—to enjoy this scene. What a glorious night! Ours is a world of such beauty, I often think how can one wish to leave it!" said the sweet voice again.

"Oh, Louise, as yet you have only seen the bright side of life. Clouds may arise—"

"Yes, I know. But don't talk of clouds. Now only see. The moon has stolen behind that huge dark bank, as if to demonstrate your ideas. But oh! true to life, the darkness is only temporary. Here our beautiful queen comes forth again, all darkness dispelling. I think the scene of the last few moments is a true picture of life, and with its lesson too. Oh, yes, I cling to our beautiful earth, never fearing its darkness, which I know must fade away, and the coming day be all the brighter for the dreariness preceding it."

Was she talking to him? Cecil almost believed she had penetrated his very soul, and was pleading to him for its safety.

"Louise, you should have been called Hope. That name would have just suited you, you are such a trusting, hopeful little body," said one of her companions.

"Yes; I know neither doubts nor fears. 'Hope on, hope ever,' is my motto. Come; now we will go, if you please."

She arose, with her friends, and moved with them until within a few steps of Cecil, when she turned, as if for a last look on the beautiful scene.

Was it by accident or design that a cluster of natural flowers fell at Cecil's feet? He had seen them in her hair a few moments before.

She stooped, as if to regain them, when Cecil sprang forward and caught them up. Quickly detaching one, he handed the others to her. She saw him, he knew, for the night was as bright and clear as noonday. Receiving her flowers, she thanked him with a smile—a smile so different from Florence's smile; not near so bright, but a gentle, sweet, pleading, saving smile. She passed on, and Cecil Delmar drew back from the entrance of the "dark valley," and followed—saved.

"Louise, what meant your words and actions to-night?" asked the gentle girl's lover, a few moments after, when they were seated alone in a private parlor.

"Harry, you know I meant something?" she asked.

"Surely. I know too, my darling, it was something of good only."

"Thank you, Harry," she answered, her eyes filling with tears of joy. "I will tell you. You have often said I could read one's thoughts. Sometimes I can. That young man who sat opposite us I thought was waiting our departure to throw himself into the ocean. I watched him closely from the moment he came near. I read despair on every feature. I talked for his ear, and saw he heard and listened. Believing I had caused him to waver in his determination, I thought possibly I might save him. That was why I dropped my little bouquet, and smiled upon him. Likely I may never see him again, as we leave to-morrow morning. But Heaven grant my endeavor may have helped him, if he was in despair, as I believed."

"Louise, you are an angel, and have saved *one* man from destruction, I know. What I am, you have made me. If that young man was in danger, you have saved him too, I think. I saw him leave the bridge."

* * * * *

Years passed on, during which many times Cecil Delmar's thoughts reverted to the girl who had saved him. Louise was a name to him the most beautiful and sacred. A little flower, faded and yellow, was treasured away, and prized dearly, when all reminders of Florence were lost and forgotten. He often heard of her in the world of fashion. Rumor spoke of her as not a happy woman. The man that many women smiled upon and "sighed for," as Florence had said, cared but little for the smiles of his wife. Perhaps he had looked into the depths of her heart, and found the skeleton hidden there.

Florence had told Cecil he had work to do. He had done, and was still doing it. Fortune had returned. Fame crowned him with her brilliant laurels. Fair women smiled upon him. Men were proud to call him friend.

Once more they met, ten years after, when Florence, regally beautiful, and a widow, seated in the "Hall of the Great," gazed from the gallery down upon the Senator from ——. The same old smile—the bright, bewitching smile. But she felt its power was over; gone, she feared, beyond recall. He hastened not to her side. She had almost despaired of his coming at all, when, as though they had parted but yesterday, he approached her. There was no hesitancy in his greeting. Calm, easy and graceful, he accepted the seat beside her, and entered into a conversation on the popular topics of the day. What cared she for them? Was it of this she had dreamed, watched and waited for? Skilfully she turned his thoughts that they might drift back to other days. But he cared not to linger with the past, she felt.

Oft his gaze wandered over the brilliant throng. At length Florence saw a look of great interest in his eye, and turning to her, he asked:

"Do you know the young lady just leaving the gallery?"

"Slightly; I have met her. But she is not a very young lady—Mrs. Clifton. She is thought quite pretty," Florence answered.

There came a look of disappointment over his face quite unmistakable to Florence, as well as to a young lady friend who sat near, and said:

"Oh, but do not despair, Mr. Delmar. She is a widow."

"Thank you," Cecil answered, smiling.

And Florence saw the information gave him pleasure. A few moments after, the young lady left them to speak to a friend in another part of the gallery. Cecil Delmar and Florence were alone. Turning toward her with a forgiving smile, he said:

"Florence."

Hope brightened again. It was the first time he had called her so.

"Years ago," he continued, "you told me I might some day thank you. Perhaps I shall. You say Mrs. Clifton is thought pretty; to me she is more than beautiful. To her I owe all that I am. She saved me that night you sent me forth despairing, reckless. I intended fleeing from the world which seemed so dark. Her words to others reached my ear. They were hopeful, cheering. I hesitated in my purpose then. A little longer and she smiled on me; that smile was my salvation. Do you wonder that to me she is more than ever woman was before? Until to-day I have never met her since that night. I shall seek an introduction; and if fortune favors me, I shall thank you for my happiness."

There was no bitterness in his tone. She would have liked it better had there been. He was dealing candidly, truthfully with her.

That night, at the President's reception, she saw him beside Louise Clifton.

She knew he was happy; that he would grow daily happier. The gentle woman was smiling upon him. Smiles not deceiving were Louise's, but sweet and encouraging, coming not alone from lip and eye, but from the pure, beautiful spirit within.

Before the close of the session, Florence read the announcement of the approaching nuptials of Cecil Delmar and the woman he loved as she knew she had never been loved.

She left the gay capital a saddened and disappointed woman. Life had taught her the severe lesson that wealth and position cannot satisfy the heart's yearnings.

A RARE PIECE OF PROPERTY.

Young Toddleby was a true-hearted and promising youth. He had graduated with honor at Yale, and was studying law with Mr. Lofter. It so happened that Toddleby became acquainted with a beautiful young lady—daughter of old Digby. He loved the fair maiden, and when he had reason to believe that his love was returned, he asked Mr. Lofter to recommend him to the father, Lofter being on terms of close intimacy with the family. The lawyer agreed, and performed his mission; but old Digby, who loved money, asked what property the young man had. Lofter said he did not know, but he would inquire. The next time he saw his young student, he asked him if he had any property at all.

"Only health, strength, and a determination to work," replied the youth.

"Well," said the lawyer, who sincerely believed the student was in every way worthy, "let us see: What will you take for your right leg? I will give you twenty thousand dollars for it."

Of course Toddleby refused.

The next time the lawyer saw the young lady's father, he said,—

"I have inquired about this young man's circumstances. He has no money in bank; but he owns a piece of property for which, to my certain knowledge, he has been offered, and has refused, twenty thousand dollars."

This led old Digby to consent to the marriage, which shortly afterward took place. In the end he had reason to be proud of his son-in-law; though he was once heard to remark, touching that rare piece of property upon the strength of which he had consented to the match, "If it could not take wings, it was liable at any time to *walk off!*" C.

—A man who has good judgment has the same advantage over men of any other qualifications whatsoever, as one that can see would have over a blind man of ten times the strength.

A WONDERFUL MICROSCOPE.

BY GEORGE W. BUNGAY.

A curious cynic, who lives on the slope
Of a hill, to others devotes his labors;
For he has a wonderful microscope,
Through which he can see the faults of his neighbors.

Their dress and address, their social affairs,
Their taxes, their income, their dues and expenses,
Their cupboards below, and their closets up strairs,
Are brought to a focus, right under his lenses.

And when a visitor calls, day or night,
Be he teacher, or doctor, or minister,
If he come within range of his sight,
He discovers his motives are sinister.

For he looks further and deeper than men's
Common eyes can see, unaided with glasses.
With his wonderful, curious, cynical lens,
He looks at the motive of man as it passes.

When a good deed has been done for the poor,
Up to his envious eyes go the lenses,
And he looks from his roof, or his window, or door,
For something that's dark hid away in the fences.

When a man wins renown, for his genius or heart,
Displayed in the "sanctum," or Congress, or college,
He declares he has something for sale in the mart,
And owes to another his over-praised knowledge.

Should his skill and his industry happen to win
A competent fortune and social position,
His microscope shows there is something within
Which ought there and then to reverse his condition.

The curious cynic who lives on the slope,
Whose words are sharp as the blades of sabres,
Makes of his own vision the microscope
Through which he can see no good in his neighbors.

A DARING GAME;

OR,

Neva's Three Lovers.

By MRS. HARRIET LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE HAMPTON MYSTERY," "THE BAILIFF'S SCHEME," "THE LADY OF KILDARE," "THE OLD LIFE'S SHADOWS," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.

LALLY IN HER NEW SITUATION.

Lally returned to Canterbury in the cab that had brought her out to Sandy Lands, Mrs. Blight's pert little villa in the suburbs, and entered upon the task of procuring a neat, although necessarily scanty wardrobe. She bought a cheap box, which she had sent to her lodgings. A lady's furnishing house yielded her a change of under garments, another print dress, and a gown of black alpaca, and a supply of collars and cuffs; her entire purchases amounting to three pounds ten shillings. She carried her effects to her attic lodging, the rent of which had been paid in advance, packed her box, and set out again in the cab for Sandy Lands.

It was noon when the vehicle stopped again before the little villa. The cabman rang the garden bell as before, and when the house-maid appeared he dumped down Lally's box upon the gravelled walk, received his pay, and departed. The smart house-maid was as contemptuous as before of Lally's humble garments, but spoke to her familiarly, as if the two were upon a social level, and conducted her toward the rear porch, saying:

"Missus said you was to be shown up to your room, Miss, to make your twilet before seeing the children. If you please," added the girl, with increasing familiarity, "you and I are to see a good deal of each other, and so I want to know what to call you."

Whatever the social rank of Lally's parents, Lally herself was a lady by instinct and education. The house-maid's easy patronage was offensive to her. She answered quietly:

"You may call me Miss Bird."

"Oh," said the house-maid, with a sniff and a toss of her head. "That's the talk, is it? Well, then, Miss Bird, follow me up to your room. This way, Miss Bird. Up these stairs, Miss Bird."

Lally followed her guide up the stairs to the third and topmost story, and to a rear room.

"This is the room of the nussery governess," said the offended house-maid, her nose in the air. "The room on your right is the school-room, Miss Bird. That on the left is the nussery. You are to have your room to yourself, Miss Bird, which I hopes will suit you. There's no petting of governesses in this here 'stablishment. You rises at seven, Miss Bird, and eats with the children. You begins lessons at nine o'clock, Miss Bird, and keeps 'em up till luncheon, and then comes music, langwidges, and them sort. Dinner in the school-room, Miss Bird, at five o'clock. Your evenings you has to yourself."

"I shall receive my list of duties from Mrs. Blight," said Lally pleasantly, "but I am obliged to you all the same."

The house-maid's face softened under Lally's gentleness and sweetness.

"I wouldn't wonder if she was a born lady, after all," the girl thought. "She won't stand putting down, and her face is that sorrowful I pity her."

But she did not give expression to these thoughts. What she did say was this:

"My name's Loizy, and if I can do anything for you just let me know. There's my bell, and I must go. When you get ready, come down stairs to Missus's boodoor."

She vanished just as the house boy, or Buttons, as he was called, appeared with Lally's box. He set this down near the door, and also departed. Left alone, Lally examined her new home with a faint thrill of interest.

The floor was bare, with the exception of a strip of loose and threadbare carpet before the low brass bedstead. There was a chintz-covered couch, a chintz-covered easy-chair, a chest of drawers, and a green-shuttered blind at the single window. The room had a dreary aspect, but to Lally it was a haven of refuge.

She locked her door and knelt down and prayed, thanking God that He had been so good to her as to give her a safe shelter and a home. Then, rising, she dressed herself as quickly as possible, putting on her black alpaca dress, a spotless linen collar and cuffs, a black sash, and a black ribbon in her hair. Thus attired, she descended the stairs, finding the way to the boudoir, at the door of which she knocked.

Mrs. Blight's languid voice bade her enter.

She obeyed, finding her employer still reclining in an armed chair, looking as if she had not moved since Lally's previous visit. She had a book in one hand, a paper cutter in the other. She recognized Lally with a sort of pleased surprise.

"Ah, back again, and punctual?" she exclaimed, glancing at a toy clock in white and blue enamel on the low mantel-piece. "I had a great many misgivings after you went away, Miss Bird. Five pounds is a good deal of money to one in your position in life, and the world is so full of swindlers. I have already written to the ladies to whom you referred me. I suppose I should have waited for their answer before engaging you, but I am such an impulsive creature, I always do just as I feel at the spur of the moment. My husband calls me 'a child of impulse,' and the words describe me exactly. I'm glad to see you back. I don't know, I'm sure, what I should have said to Mr. Blight if you had decamped, for he does not appreciate my ability to read faces. The time I got taken in with my last cook—the one we found lying with her head in a brass kettle, and the kitchen fire gone out, at the very hour when I had a large company assembled to dine with me—Charles said, 'Fudge, don't let us hear any more about physiognomy.' You see, I engaged the woman because her face was all that could be desired. And since that time Charles won't hear a word about physiognomy."

Lally sat down, obeying a wave of Mrs. Blight's hand. That "child of impulse," silly, garrulous, and puffed up with self-importance and vulgarity, pursued her theme until she had exhausted it.

"You are looking very well, Miss Bird," she said, changing the subject, "but all in black—why, you are quite a black-bird, I declare," and she laughed at her own wit. "Are you in mourning? Have you lately lost a friend?"

"Yes, madam," replied Lally sorrowfully, "I have lately lost the only friend I had in the whole world."

"Oh, indeed. That is sad; but I do hope you won't wear a long face and go moping about the house, frightening the children," said Mrs. Blight, with a candor that was less charming than oppressive to her newly engaged governess. "You must do as the poet so romantically says:

> "'Wear a smile,
> Though the cold heart runs darkly to ruin the while.'

If he doesn't say just that, it's some such thing, and a very pretty sentiment too. And now let us discuss your new duties."

She proceeded to sketch Lally's duties, much as the house-maid had done. Then she gave a history of each one of the five children who were to be under Lally's supervision. Three of the children were boys, and their fond mother described them as paragons. Her girls also were extraordinary in their mental and physical attractions, "having once been taken, at the Zoological gardens, during a visit to London, by a strange gentleman, for the children of a nobleman!"

"I will accompany you to the nursery, Miss Bird," said the lady, arising. "I desire to introduce you to my darlings. I have great faith in the instincts of children, and I want to see what my children think of you."

Accordingly Mrs. Blight conducted Lally again to the upper floor and to the nursery, which was at the moment of their entrance in a state of wildest confusion and disorder.

The nurse, a stout old woman, and the nurse-maid, a red-faced young girl, were in a state of despair, and frantically holding their hands to their ears, while five robust, boisterous, frouzy-headed children rode about the room upon chairs, played "tag," and otherwise disported themselves.

The entrance of Mrs. Blight and Lally caused a cessation of the noise. The mother called her children to her, but they retreated with their fingers in their mouths, looking askance at their new governess. The three "noble boys" presently set up a loud bellowing, and the two girls who had been "mistaken by a strange gentleman for the children of a nobleman," hid behind their nurses.

It required all the persuasions, coupled with threats, of Mrs. Blight, to induce her shy children to show themselves to Lally. It appeared that they had a horror of governesses, regarding them as tyrants and ogresses created especially to destroy the happiness of children; but Lally's smiles, added to the fact that she looked but little more than a child, finally induced them to be sociable and to approach her.

"In a day or two you won't be able to do anything with them, Miss," said the head nurse. "They'll ride rough-shod over you."

"They are so spirited," murmured Mrs. Blight. "Study their characters closely, Miss Bird, and be very tender with them. I have one child more than the Queen, and my children are named for the royal family. These three boys are Leopold, Albert Victor, and George. The girls are named Victoria and Alberta. My elder children are at school. Children, this is Miss Bird, your new governess. Now come with her into the school-room. Lessons begin immediately."

The little flock, with Lally at their head, was conducted to the school-room, a large, bare apartment, furnished with two benches, a teacher's chair and desk, and a black-board. Here Mrs. Blight left them, convinced that she had fulfilled her duties as parent and employer, and returned to her book.

Lally proceeded to examine into the acquirements of her pupils, finding them lamentably ignorant. Lessons were given out, but there was no disposition on the part of her pupils to study. They threw paper balls at each other, whispered and giggled, and altogether proved at the very outset a sore trial to their young teacher. Their shyness lasted for but a brief period, and then, having no longer fear of the sad-faced governess, began to romp about the room, to shout, and to engage in a general game of frolics.

Lally had a vein of decision in her character, and with the exercise of a gentle firmness induced her pupils to return to their seats. She explained their lessons to them with an unfailing patience, but the hours of that September afternoon seemed almost endless to her. The children were froward, disobedient, and idle. They had been spoiled by their mother, and were full of mischievous tricks, so that Lally's soul wearied within her.

Dinner, a very plain and frugal one, was served to the governess and the children in the school-room at five o'clock. After dinner, Lally's time belonged to herself, and she put on her hat and went out for a walk, having a longing for the fresh air.

This first day at Sandy Lands was a fair type of the days that followed. The children, under Lally's firm but gentle rule, became more quiet and studious, and conceived an affection for their young governess. Mrs. Blight was delighted with their improvement. She had received a reply from Lally's former employers, giving the young girl very high praise, and was consequently well pleased with herself for securing such valuable services as Lally's at a salary less than half she had ever before paid to a governess.

Mr. Blight was a lawyer in good practice at Canterbury, and spent his days at his office, returning to Sandy Lands to dine, and leaving home immediately after breakfast. He was a small, ferret-eyed man, always in a hurry, a mere money making machine, with a great ambition to make or acquire a fortune. At present he lived fully up to his income, a fact which gave both him and Mrs. Blight much secret anxiety. With ten children to educate and provide for, several servants to pay, a carriage and pair for Mrs. Blight, and the lawyer's wines, cigars, frequent elaborate dinners to his friends, and other items by no means small to settle, Mr. Blight was continually harassed by debt, and yet had not sufficient strength of will to reduce his expenses and live within his income.

One cause, perhaps, of their indiscreet self-indulgence was that they had "expectations."

There was an old lady connected with the family, the widow of a wealthy London banker who had been Mr. Blight's uncle. This old lady was supposed to have no relatives of her own to enrich at her death, and the Blights had lively hopes of inheriting her fifty thousand pounds, which had descended to her absolutely at her husband's death, and of which she was free to dispose as she might choose.

This lady lived in London, at the West End, was very eccentric, very irascible, and went little in society, being quite aged and infirm. She was in the habit of coming down to Sandy Lands annually in September, ostensibly to spend a month with her late husband's relatives; but she always returned home within a week, alleging that she could not bear the noise of the Blight children, and that a month under the same roof with them would deprive her of life or reason. It was now about the time of this lady's annual visit, and one morning, when Lally had been about two weeks at Sandy Lands, Mrs. Blight came up to the school-room, an open letter in her hand, and dismissing the children to the nursery for a few minutes, said confidentially:

"Miss Bird, I have just received a letter from the widow of my husband's uncle, a remarkable old lady, with fifty thousand pounds at her own absolute disposal. My husband is naturally the old lady's heir, being her late husband's nephew, and we expect to inherit her property. Her name is Mrs. Wroat."

"An odd name!" murmured Lally.

"And she's as odd as her name," declared Mrs. Blight. "She comes here at this time every year, and always brings a parrot, a lap-dog, a bandbox in a green muslin case, a blue umbrella, and a snuffy old maid, who eyes us all as if we had designs on her mistress's life. The absurd old creature is devoted to her mistress, who is a mere bundle of whims and eccentricities. The old lady calls for a cup of coffee at midnight, and she hates our dear children, and she thrashed Leopold with her cane last year, because he put nettles in her bed and flour on her best cap, the poor dear innocent child! And I never dared to interfere to save Leopold, though his screams rang through the house, and I stood outside her door listening and peeping, for you know we must have her fifty thousand pounds, even if she takes the lives of all my darlings!" and Mrs. Blight's tone was pathetic. "She's a nasty old beast—there! Of course I say it in confidence, Miss Bird. It would be all up with us, if Aunt Wroat were to hear that I said that. She's very tenacious of respect, and all that bother, and insisted I should punish Albert Victor because he called her 'an old curmudgeon.'"

"When do you expect this lady?" asked Lally.

"To-morrow, with her maid, lapdog, parrot, umbrella and bandbox. She writes that she will stay a month, and that she must have no annoyance from the children, and that she won't have them in her room—the old nuisance! If it wasn't for her money, I'd telegraph her to go to Guinea, but as we are situated I can't. I must put up with her ways. And what I want of you, Miss Bird, is to see that the children do not stir off this floor while she is here. Let them die for want of exercise, the poor darlings, rather than we offend this horrid old woman. If we sacrifice ourselves, she can't leave her property to some fusty old charity, that's one comfort."

"I will do my best to keep the children out of Mrs. Wroat's sight," said Lally gravely.

"You must succeed in doing so, for the old lady says this will probably be her last visit to us, as she is growing more and more infirm, and she hints that it is time to make her will. Everything depends upon her reception on the occasion of this visit. Let her get miffed at us, and it's all up. I declare I wish I had a place where I could hive the children during her stay. She must not see or hear them, Miss Bird."

"Is there anything more that I can do, Mrs. Blight?"

"Yes; she always has the governess play upon the piano and sing to her in the evening. She is fond of music, desperately so. We always hire a cottage piano and put it in her sitting-room while she stays, and the governess plays to her there evenings. She's very liberal with a governess who can play well. She gave Miss Oddly last year a five-pound note. And always when she leaves us after a visit, she hands me twenty pounds and says she never wants to be indebted to anybody, and that's to defray her expenses while here. I have to take it. I wouldn't dare to refuse it."

"I shall be glad to amuse her in any way, Mrs. Blight," declared the young governess. "I shall not mind her eccentricities, and shall remember that she is 'aged and infirm.'"

"And that she has fifty thousand pounds which we must have," said Mrs. Blight. "Don't fail to remember that!"

Much relieved at having guarded against a meeting between her expected guest and her children, Mrs. Blight departed to seek an interview with her cook.

Extensive preparations were made that day for the reception of Mrs. Wroat. Two rooms were prepared for her use, one of them having two beds, one bed being for the use of the maid. A cottage piano was hired and put into one of the rooms. The choicest articles of furniture in the house were arranged for her use. The hint that Mrs. Wroat was thinking of making her will was sufficient to render her time-serving, money-hunting relatives gentle, pliable, and apparently full of tender anxiety for her happiness and comfort.

Mr. Blight was informed of the good news when he came home to dinner, and he sought a personal interview with his children's governess, entreating her to keep the youngsters out of sight during the visit of Mrs. Wroat, as she valued her situation.

Everything being thus arranged, it only remained for the guest to arrive.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NEVA'S ANSWER TO LORD TOWYN.

Mr. and Mrs. Craven Black, summoning the indispensable Mrs. Artress to a private conference, passed some hours in their own room in anxious deliberation upon their future course in regard to Neva. It was necessary to the full success of the daring game they were playing, that Neva should marry Rufus Black; but she had rejected him, completely and finally, in obedience to her instincts of duty to God and to herself, and her enemies began to believe that they would have serious trouble in forcing her into the marriage. But they did not falter in their evil determination, and the three plotted and planned until their united villainy had formed a scheme which promised them success.

In accordance with the conclusion to which they finally arrived, Mrs. Artress went away from Hawkhurst that very afternoon in the family brougham, and two trunks belonging to her were conveyed to Canterbury in a spring wagon. It was given out that she was going to London to visit a friend, with whom she would remain until after the return of Mr. and Mrs. Craven Black from Wynde Heights. She really went up to London, but to what point she then directed her wanderings no one knew, and very probably few cared.

Rufus Black wandered disconsolately all day in the park, and came in an hour before dinner, hungry and tired, and with a sullen and hopeless countenance. His father encountered him in the upper hall, and went into his room with him.

"That's a fine face, Rufus," said Craven Black sneeringly, "to win the heart of a girl like Miss Wynde. You look as if you were travelling straight to the dogs."

"So I am, sir," said Rufus recklessly.

"You dare to answer me in that manner?"

"To whom should I tell the truth, if not to you?" cried Rufus desperately. "You have made me what I am. I married a pure and innocent young girl, who but for me was utterly friendless in the wide world. You tore me from her. You persuaded me that my marriage was illegal—"

"And wasn't it?"

"I suppose it was, but it was not null and void. It could have been set aside by due process of law, because I was a minor, and because I perjured myself in declaring that I was of age; but I refuse to believe that it was null and void, no marriage at all. I never wronged my poor Lally as you pretend."

"Why this spasm of virtue?" demanded Craven Black, with a cynical smile. "The girl's dead, isn't she?"

"Yes, she's dead! God help me!"

"What a tragic groan! This morning you were in despair because Miss Wynde rejected you. To-night you are mourning after your corn-chandler's daughter. I'd like to understand you—I would indeed. Which are you wailing after, Miss Wynde or Lalla Rookh?"

"Which?" cried Rufus, with wild eyes. "For the girl you and I murdered! It is she whom I mourn! I think of her stark form and open eyes and dead bruised face, as she must have looked when they brought her up out of the river, and my heart is like to break within me. She haunts me day and night. In my bed I waken from my dreams to clasp her closer to me, but my arms close on the empty air. I seem to feel the touch of her hands on my face—oh, Heaven! I shall never feel them there again! I was a poor pitiful coward. Yet what could I do? And yet you and I are Lally's murderers!"

Craven Black shivered involuntarily.

"You act as if you had a touch of the D. T.," he said. "Have you been spending the day in a Canterbury pot-house?"

"No; I have been wandering in the park, trying to forget. You need not fear that I shall get drunk again."

"Your reflections were rather singular for a rejected lover of Miss Wynde," sneered Craven Black. "I thought you loved the heiress?"

"So I do, but not as I loved Lally. If Miss Wynde does not take pity on me, I am lost. The love of a good woman would save me from madness and utter despair. In time I might grow to love her as I loved Lally, and in any case I would worship her from very gratitude."

"I am blessed if I can understand you," said Craven Black, his lips curling. "You love a dead woman and a living woman, and mourn one while you want to marry the other. It is very curious. It's a pity you are not a Mahommedan, so that you could have had both."

"Stop!" cried Rufus, in a tone of command. "Don't speak such words in connection with the names of Lally and Miss Wynde. I want to marry Neva to save myself from going mad—"

"After another woman? Exactly. No wonder Miss Wynde declined the honor, with thanks."

"I shall leave here to-morrow," said Rufus.

"You won't do any such thing. You will stay at Hawkhurst for the remainder of the week, and play the lover to Miss Wynde, and sigh like any donkey in her ears, and spout poetry, and touch her heart. 'Faint heart never won fair lady,' says the proverb. Girls often refuse a man the first time he offers, for fear of being held too cheap. Pursue the girl gently, but keep pursuing."

"She says her father wrote her a letter saying he knew me," said Rufus doggedly. "She asked me about him, and I told her I didn't know Sir Harold from a butcher."

"You did?" gasped Craven Black. "The devil!"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, you have put your foot in it. I knew you were a fool, but I didn't suppose you had arrived at such a low state of idiocy as it appears you have. Didn't I tell you what to tell the girl if she ever spoke of her father?"

"I believe you did, but I couldn't stand there with her eyes on me and deliberately lie to her. I understood about the letter. *You* wrote it."

"Hush! I've a good mind to leave you to yourself, and let you fetch up in some union," declared Craven Black angrily. "Such a dolt as you are isn't fit to live. How do you expect the girl to marry you when you yourself put obstacles in the way?"

"See here," said Rufus. "What are you going to make out of my marriage with Neva Wynde?"

"Ten thousand pounds a year, which you are to formally agree to pay me out of her income."

"I thought you had some motive in the matter besides love to me. But I'd pay it if she'd marry me. But she won't."

"She will, if you choose to be a little bolder. We leave here, my wife, Neva and myself, next Monday for Wynde Heights. Mrs. Black will use all her influence with Neva during our absence to induce her to accept you, and I am sure she will succeed. You are to hold yourself in readiness to come to us at any moment on receiving my summons."

"Where is Wynde Heights?"

"In Yorkshire."

"Very well. I will come when you notify me. But I don't think going will do any good. Miss Wynde is no coquette, and not likely to change her mind. Besides, she is likely to marry Lord Towyn."

"I think not," said Craven Black significantly. "She is a minor, and I don't believe she would marry against the wishes of her step-mother?"

"*The question is if your wife is her step-mother,*" remarked Rufus, still recklessly. "*The probability is that the relationship is worn out by this time, and the sense of duty* that Miss Wynde may have felt toward her father's widow will fall short when it comes to be directed toward Craven Black's wife."

"We won't go into details," said his father coolly. "If you want to marry the girl, keep telling her so. There's nothing like persistence."

"Ye-s; but about that ten thousand pounds a year?" said Rufus thoughtfully. "I don't think it would be right to take any such sum out of her income, and besides, it might be impossible."

"Leave that to me. As to the right and wrong of it, a perjurer is not qualified to judge. Confine yourself to what you can understand. It is time to get ready for dinner, and I advise you to come down with a cheerful face."

With this advice, Craven Black went away to his own rooms.

Rufus resolved to act upon his father's advice, and when he went down to dinner with a pale, melancholy face, and haggard eyes, he wore an air of assumed cheerfulness which touched Neva's heart.

That evening he sang with her while she played upon the piano. He quoted poetry to her in the third drawing-room, where they were alone, and afterward induced her to walk with him in the moonlight upon the terrace.

The next day he was full of delicate attentions to Miss Wynde. She found a bouquet of wood violets at her plate at breakfast, with the dew still upon them, and knew who had procured them for her. He asked to be allowed to accompany her on her morning ride, and Neva assented. After the ride, they played chess, gathered bouquets in the conservatory, and, later, walked in the park. Neva was gently courteous to him all the while, but there was a quiet reserve in her manner that forbade him to speak again of love or marriage to her.

The day after, Lord Towyn called at Hawkhurst, and Mr. and Mrs. Craven Black received him with all courtesy, and were so politely attentive to him that he could not exchange a word with Neva unheard by them.

The young Earl went away, as may be supposed, troubled and annoyed.

On Friday he rode over again from his marine villa, and was similarly entertained, and again could not see Neva alone.

On Saturday he came to Hawkhurst in the early morning, and learned at the lodge gate that Miss Wynde, attended by her groom, was gone for a ride, and that she had gone by the Dingle Farm. His heart bounded within him, and he spurred away in eager pursuit.

He traversed the wood and crossed the wide common, and skirted the dangerous chalk pit, and rode up to the old farm gate just as Neva, remounting her horse, came riding out on her return.

The young Earl's warm blue eyes flashed a tender radiance upon her, and he raised his hat, his golden hair gleaming in the sunshine, while his noble face glowed with a laughing delight. An answering radiance flashed from Neva's red-brown orbs, and she blushed as she bade him a careless good-morning.

"I came out to meet you," said Lord Towyn, as he wheeled his horse and rode at her side. "I have much to say to you."

He glanced over his shoulder, but the discreet groom was hanging back, and with a mental blessing upon the fellow, Lord Towyn saw that the field was clear, and that the time had arrived in which to learn his fate.

They rode on for a little while in silence, until they were past the chalk pit and out upon the breezy common. The groom was out of earshot, and the young Earl said gently:

"Neva, I have been twice to Hawkhurst to receive the answer you promised me, but I could not speak to you alone. I may not find another opportunity than this, as you go with the Blacks to Wynde Heights on Monday. And so, although this does not seem a fitting place, I ask you again if you will be my wife? I love you, Neva, with all my heart and soul. If you will trust your happiness to me, you will find in me a true lover to the end of our days. Do you think you could be happy with me?"

Neva's pure proud face flushed hotly, and she bent her head low toward her saddle-bow. Lord Towyn waited for her answer in an almost breathless suspense, but she did not speak until they were in the wood path and out of sight of even the lagging groom.

Then she lifted her head shyly, and turned upon her lover a face as divinely fair and roseate as a June morning, and although she spoke no word he read assent in the drooping eyes, the reddening cheeks, and the proud, tremulous mouth.

He pressed toward her in rapture, and seized one little gauntleted hand, pressing it in his own.

"It is Yes, Neva?" he whispered, as if fearing the very birds might hear him. "Oh, my darling, how shall I deserve this great joy?"

He raised her hand to his lips, and the contact thrilled his very soul. He looked back. No one was in sight. He stooped in his saddle and bent toward her, and his kiss, warm, tender and passionate, fell upon her scarlet mouth, and thus they were betrothed.

The next instant he was again erect in his saddle, and the ecstasy of his glowing face and the unrepressed rapture of his manner, and the tender caressing in his very gaze, proclaimed his great and solemn joy.

"I have a ring, it was my mother's, Neva, and I ask you to wear it as a sign of our engagement to each other," he said. "When I see my mother's ring on your finger, I shall feel that you are indeed mine."

He took from his little finger a gold ring set with a single brilliant of great size and splendor. Neva tremblingly removed her gauntlet, and the young Earl placed the ring upon that finger which custom has dedicated to the purpose.

"That is the seal of our betrothal," he whispered.

Neva slowly put on her glove.

"Arthur," she said suddenly, "do you think papa would have approved my marriage with you?"

"I know he would, my darling. It was his wish, as it was my father's, that we should marry."

"If I could only think that he never changed his mind!" sighed the young girl. "I have a letter he wrote me the night before he perished in India, Arthur, and in this letter he says that he desires me to marry Rufus Black."

The young Earl looked surprised, incredulous.

"I have the letter with me," said Neva. "You can read it. In it papa says he desires me to marry this young man, whom he esteems and loves. I have struggled to obey papa's last wishes, but I cannot—I cannot! And he was such a good father, Arthur, that I reproach myself continually for my disobedience. I never disobeyed him before, and I seem to see his eyes full of reproach fixed upon me, and to hear his voice— Oh, Arthur! Arthur!"

"Let me see the letter, darling."

Neva extricated it from the folds of her dress, and gave it to him. They halted while he read it. A look of surprise, wonder and incredulity mantled Lord Towyn's face as he read. It was followed by a sternness that well became his fair and haughty face.

"I pronounce the letter a forgery!" he declared. "May I keep it, Neva, for the present? I desire to show it to Mr. Atkins, who shall give us his opinion on the handwriting."

"Yes; keep it," assented Neva.

Lord Towyn carefully put it in his pocket.

"*I pronounce the letter a forgery,*" he repeated sternly. "*How did it come to you, darling?*"

"*Lady Wynde gave it to me on my return from France. Papa desired her to retain it for a year. Who would forge such a letter, Arthur?*"

"*I don't know. I am puzzled. One cannot suspect Lady Wynde, and yet—and yet— I don't know what to think, Neva. I don't believe Sir Harold ever saw Rufus Black.*"

"*Rufus says he never saw papa, or that* he never spoke to him," said Neva. "And that remark made me doubt the letter. But Rufus never forged it, Arthur. Rufus is a kind-hearted, but weak-willed boy—he is no more. If he had more 'backbone' in his character, he would be even noble. I like him, Arthur, and I know he never wrote that letter. Lady Wynde did not. She is too good for that. It might have been written by Craven Black. I do not like him, and think him quite capable of the forgery, only so many of the words are papa's own that it seems wicked to doubt its authenticity."

"I will prove it a forgery!" cried the young Earl. "Sir Harold was incapable of binding your fate in this manner to a man you never saw before it was written. There is some foul conspiracy against you, Neva, but we have outwitted your enemies. I am impatient to have you under my own guardianship. The possibility that you have enemies makes me afraid to trust you from me. Give up this visit to Wynde Heights, darling."

"It is too late, Arthur. We shall stay there but a fortnight, and I have promised to go. Papa bade me love his wife and obey her, and though she no longer bears his name, and I no longer owe her obedience, yet I have given my word to go up to Yorkshire with her, and must keep my promise."

"But when you return, Neva, you will marry me? Do not condemn me to a long probation. Let us be married quietly some morning at the Wyndham church, after due intimation to our friends. Shall it not be so?"

Neva yielded a shy assent.

"We will be married a month hence, Neva?" whispered the ardent young lover.

"Two months," said Neva, smiling. "I must not be too lightly won, Lord Towyn. And, besides, I must have the orthodox trousseau. I will tell Mrs. Black of our engagement when I am with her at Wynde Heights. Rufus is not going with us, nor is Artress."

They had threaded the wood and come out upon the highway long since while they were talking, and were now within sight of Hawkhurst. Rufus Black was riding out of the great gates, on his way to meet Neva. The tête-à-tête of the young pair was over for the morning, and recognizing the fact, and not wishing to proclaim his happy secret to his defeated rival, Lord Towyn made his adieus to Neva, begging her to write him daily from Yorkshire, which she promised to do, and then, raising his hat to Rufus Black, the young Earl spurred his horse and rode swiftly on toward Wyndham.

Neva returned home with Rufus.

On Monday morning, Mr. and Mrs. Craven Black, accompanied by Miss Wynde, departed for Wynde Heights.

On Wednesday, Lord Towyn looked for a letter from his young betrothed. None came. Thursday, Friday and Saturday went by, and still there came no letter from Neva, announcing her safe arrival in Yorkshire.

The young Earl wrote every day, his uneasiness increasing as the time passed. He communicated his alarm to Sir John Freise and Mr. Atkins, and they telegraphed to the clergyman of the little town in whose vicinity Wynde Heights was situated, begging him to call and see if Miss Wynde was in good health.

The answer to this dispatch came promptly, and also by telegraph. It was to this effect:

"Sir John Freise and Mr. Atkins: Wynde Heights is untenanted, save by the housekeeper. Miss Wynde has not been here, nor have Mr. and Mrs. Black."

On receipt of this astounding message, the young Earl posted up to town, as did Sir John Freise and Mr. Atkins. They searched for the missing heiress and her guardians, but their search was futile. Not a trace of her could be found. She had come up to London with her enemies, but no further clue to her could be found. She had completely disappeared, and her fate was shrouded in dark and horrible mystery!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

DISPUTES.—It is an excellent rule to be observed in all disputes, that men should give soft words and hard arguments; that they should not so much strive to vex, as to convince an opponent.

THE MOURNER'S CRY.

BY ETHEL LYNN.

Stay, O angel, homeward turning,
Toward the stars new lit and burning,
Satisfy this ceaseless yearning;
Show me Him!
Shall I see Him nearer never;
Fruitless find each new endeavor?
While the glass of Faith forever
Waxeth dim.

Through the dew-drop in the flower,
Through the clouds that stooping, lower,
God I see, his love and power,
And adore.
Yet I ask for vision clearer,
Lens to show the Master dearer;
He who, loving, stooping nearer,
Manhood wore.

Through the roll of Judah's glory
Catch I visions of the story,
Through its smoky shadows gory—
The Crucified.
Through cathedral window painted
Comes the simple sunshine, tainted
With the legends of the sainted
Who have died.

Can the high-priest jewels lighten,
Chrysoprase or ruby brighten,
Diamond with glory whiten?
Can they bring
Jesus in the cradle sleeping?
Over far Jerusalem weeping?
On the cross His promise keeping?—
Priest and King?

* * * * *

Then the angel, hither turning
From the lamps new lit and burning,
Satisfied my ceaseless yearning,
Stooping low.
Not the path I would have sought it;
Not the price I willed has bought it;
Not the way I should have wrought it—
No! Ah, no!

By mine idols shattered lying,
O'er my vanished treasures sighing,
Low I bent, with bitter crying,
Wailingly,
When a tear-drop's falling glimmer
Crystal made the glass grown dimmer;
Now, through all its lurid shimmer,
Him I see!

DEATH AND THE HIGHWAYMAN.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

The days of highwaymen are over in Merry England. To be sure, men are known to take purses, and even to blow brains out for the sake of them, but they are common malefactors, as vulgar as the city house-breakers and pickpockets, and as likely to come to grief.

There was a time, however, when this was not so. At that date a certain romance hung about the highwayman, who was often a desperado of good family. They were popularly supposed to rob old churls and misers, and discomfit the emissaries of the law, who were in no good odor, and to spare gentle ladies and innocent children, or even to give to the deserving poor what they snatched by force from the undeserving rich.

So girls gathered together in the gloaming and told tales of their valor, and wished themselves Gentlemen of the Road for lovers; and there were landladies who welcomed them with smiles, refused to take pay for their ale and wine and venison pasties, and parted from them with kisses and a "God speed you," instead of rushing to the authorities with information, as would a landlady of to-day. To be sure, there was a difference of opinion.

Old gentlemen who were left to walk barefoot and without their wigs through the bleak night, over rough moorlands, leaving their purses and their wardrobe in the hands of some merry highwayman, were not so complaisant; and stage-coach loads of robbed passengers had held indignation meetings, in which the Claude Duvals and Robin Hoods of the day were not highly commended; but they seldom accomplished anything. And if now and then one gallant captain was caught and put to death by the strong arm of the law, the girls wept for him as for a martyr, and the ballad-singers made a little fortune from the rehearsal of his exploits.

They said, who knew, that of all the gentlemen of the road Captain Blythe was the handsomest, the most gallant, the fondest of heroic deeds. He was five and twenty; he dressed like a nobleman; he was indeed a nobleman's son—a younger son, which means, when the family estate is small and the coffers not over full, nothing more nor less than a poor man.

So, being penniless, and thus losing the girl he loved, who married his elder brother, the title and the estate, the young man went to the bad altogether. He flung away name and good fame, joined a band of outlaws, called himself Blythe, and being as daring a young fellow as ever trod the earth, became ere long their captain.

"Beware of Blythe and his men. They are said to be on the road," was a warning that made a whole stage full of stalwart men turn pale with terror.

For five years Jack Blythe had escaped all harm. His freaks were daring beyond expression. He feared no one. While the magistrate was in search of him, he, under another name, danced with his daughters at the county ball, and left early enough to surprise the magistrate's emissary on the road, and rob him of the warrant of arrest.

He sent a diamond trinket which was a love gift, and so marked, back to its owner, with Captain Blythe's compliments.

And he restored a young lady her purse in payment for a kiss, which she gave him, it was said, not unwillingly.

And one night he rode out upon the road with four of his band to lie in wait for the mail coach, and rob it and its passengers at any cost.

They reined their horses in the shadow of a clump of trees and waited. The moon, at her full, shone down upon the road, making it ashy white. The towers of an old convent arose in the distance. The roofs of one or two poor dwellings were visible. All else was bleak and desolate moorland. The highwaymen were in high spirits; Captain Blythe at his best. They were ready for any mad freak whatsoever.

"Hark!" cried one. "Listen. They are coming."

"Those are hoofs, not wheels," said another.

"Hoofs or wheels, welcome!" said the Captain.

The sound came nearer. A solitary rider evidently, advanced toward him. In a moment more they saw it—a figure in a black cloak, with a hood drawn over its head, hiding its face, riding on a black steed without spot or mark.

Captain Blythe waited until it came into full view, and rode out to meet it.

On the instant the man drew rein, and the horse stood utterly still—a black blot in the whitest strength of the white moonlight—horse and rider alike motionless. There was something very mysterious about the whole effect.

"Stand and deliver!" said Captain Blythe.

"I stand," replied a voice from beneath the cloak—a voice hollow, deep and awful. "What would'st thou have me deliver? We bring nothing into this world, and we can take nothing out of it. Amen."

Captain Blythe laughed.

"Preach if you like," he said; "but keep your sermon for your consolation upon the road. I will take your purse, and any valuables you may have about you, at your earliest convenience."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the stranger, in hollow tones. "Ha! ha! ha! Beware! touch me not!"

"Beware?" scoffed Captain Blythe. "Whoever you may be, I am one who fears neither the King, the Devil, nor Death. Your money or your life!"

"Keep your money and give me your life, for I am Death," responded the stranger, in the same sepulchral tones.

As he spoke he flung back cloak and hood, and the horrified highwayman saw a grinning skull and the white bones of a skeleton.

"Your life!" repeated the awful voice. But almost before the words were uttered Captain Blythe had put spurs to his horse, and the whole party galloped furiously down the road, crossing themselves, and calling on the saints.

The next morning, when the monks of the convent whose gray walls were visible from the road, came forth to prayer, they found a man kneeling before the altar—a young man, finely dressed, booted and spurred. Asking his name, he replied:

"I am but a poor penitent, who, for his sins, has seen Death even in life. Have mercy upon me!"

And so, since he had a vast hoard of ill-gotten wealth to place at their disposal, Captain Jack Blythe, the noted highwayman, became a brother of St. Simon, and the legend of his meeting with Death upon the road, and so being turned toward heaven, became the property of the monastery.

Five years passed—ten—fifteen—still he was Brother John—still he was humbly penitent—still in his little cell he kept a skull and cross-bones, in memory of his awful warning. As he had been the first among the sinners, he became first among the saints: zealous in good works; fond of flogging himself, and walking about with peas in his shoes, and fasting and praying; doing much real good among the poor, who grew to love him, and to whom he often gave money which he begged from the wealthy.

Good Brother John —— was known near



and afar for all excellent things. He was no longer young—he was nearly five and forty—but he was still the handsomest man in the monastery for all that.

It was a day in midwinter, a bitter day. The blast swept wildly over the moors; the rain beat against the panes of the convent windows. But above it all were heard cries of distress. "Help, help, help!" The cry rose on the blast: "Help, help, help!" It faded away in an awful moan.

The brothers crossed themselves. And Brother John and one other went out to see what had befallen.

They found an old man upon the road. His horse had stumbled and fallen upon him, and he had sustained woeful injuries. Bearing him in, they ministered unto him; and in the dead of the night Brother John sat beside his bed telling his beads. One pale candle alone burnt beside the bed, but it fell upon the Brother's face.

"Eh," cried the old man, suddenly lifting up his head, "how like!"

"Like what, my son?" asked Brother John.

"I fear I shall offend you," said the old man; "but you are like a highwayman who flourished some fifteen years ago—like as two peas. You have heard of him perhaps; his name was Blythe—Captain Jack Blythe."

"In a monastery we hear little of such things," said Brother John. "I am not offended. All men are made in the image of their Maker, though some offend him sorely."

"I saw him but once," said the old man, running on, as people in a slight fever often do; "only once. He was a handsome man, so no offence on that score, Brother. I played him a trick, God wot, that frightened him, brave as he was—he a highwayman, I but a poor strolling player. Ah, it was a jest indeed. Shall I tell it?"

"Yes," said the brother, leaning forward eagerly. "Yes; go on."

"The company were travelling, and what little they had they needed," said the man. "They were going by the mail coach; and half way on, we were warned of Captain Blythe. Some were for turning back; but I had an idea. I knew I could frighten him. I had played Death on the stage often, and had a mask that was a skull, and a black dress tight as my skin, marked off in white for ribs and bones. So I blackened up a horse—the spots on him that were light—and with a hooded cloak on, rode before the coach. I met the highwayman indeed, and he demanded my purse. But I showed him what was under my cloak. 'Twas a perfect skeleton, Brother, with that black background, and he sped away in fear. So the mail coach got safely to London that night, and many a time have I laughed about it—"

He babbled on, talking of this thing and that, growing more feverish and more delirious every hour; but he prattled to empty walls. Brother John had glided from the room.

He had gone to his cell, and there, standing before the grinning skull that adorned it, clenched his hand in fury.

"Idiot that I was, to be fooled by a strolling player!" he cried, and dashed the awful emblem of mortality to the ground, and stamped upon it.

The monks found him not in the morning, and those white fragments on the stone floor puzzled them. As for the poor strolling player, he was in the delirium of fever by that time, and shortly died. So he told them nothing.

But for some little time the country round about was in terror of a man who called himself Captain Death—a man who, in some mysterious way, appeared as a skeleton to those he robbed, and frightened them out of all power of resistance. At last, however, one braver than the rest took aim with his pistol at that spot under the empty ribs of the figure where the heart of living man should be, and fired. A solid body dropped to the ground with a groan. Captain Jack Blythe had met Death face to face at last.

To be Pitied.

The man who is able to work and does not, is to be pitied as well as despised. He knows nothing of sweet sleep and pleasant dreams. He is a miserable drone, and eats a substance he does not earn. Perhaps he thinks it is not genteel to work. His kind of gentility is the most worthless and contemptible of all gentility. Had not those before him, near or remote, toiled hard, the degenerate son or daughter would be compelled to earn their bread, instead of being a bogus aristocracy upon property they never earned. One generation labors hard to accumulate dollars and cents, for a generation of simpletons to squander.

ANECDOTE OF JUDGE KEYS.

Elias Keys, in his old-age, was a Judge of Windsor county, Vermont. He was a strange composition of folly and good sense, of natural shrewdness and want of cultivation, but honest and humane to the core. A poor ragged fellow was once brought before him and clearly convicted of having stolen a pair of boots from General Curtis, a wealthy man of the town of Windsor, on which occasion old Keys pronounced sentence as follows:

"Well, you are a fine fellow to be arraigned before a court for stealing. They say you are poor. No one doubts it who looks at you. And how dare you, being poor, have the impudence to steal a pair of boots? Nobody but rich men have a right to things for which they do not pay. And they say you are worthless. That is evident from the fact that nobody has asked justice to be done you;—all, by unanimous consent, pronounced you guilty before you were tried. Now you, being *worthless*, was a fool to steal, because you might have known you would be condemned. And you must know that it was a great aggravation to your offence that you stole them in the large town of Windsor! And not only go into that large and important town to commit such a horrible act, but you must steal from that great man, General Curtis! This caps the climax of your iniquity. Base wretch! why did you not go and steal the only pair of boots which some poor man had, or could get? You might then have been let alone. The great town would not have been convulsed. For your iniquity in stealing in the great town of Windsor, and from the great General Curtis, the court sentences you to three months' imprisonment in the county jail.—And may God take care of you beyond that!"

S. C., JR.

SCIENCE.

During a total eclipse of the sun, the corona which shines out around the dark edge of the moon at the instant of totality is observed to consist of two portions: an inner ring of pure white light, and outside of this a radiated halo. The spectroscopic examination of this inner ring corona made on the occasion of the December eclipse, by Prof. Respighi of Italy, indicates that it is an independent atmosphere of glowing hydrogen gas, of great rarity, surrounding the sun on all sides to a depth of two hundred thousand miles. The radiated corona envelopes this atmosphere, and extends at times to a distance of a million miles from the solar surface proper.

A suspicion that the celebrated guano deposits in the Chincha Islands, on the coast of Peru, are composed of the accumulated bodies of marine animals and plants, instead of the excreta of birds, as has generally been believed, is somewhat strengthened by the announcement that guano is frequently brought up from the sea bottom near the islands, on the anchors of ships which visit their harbors. It seems difficult to reconcile this fact with the theory ordinarily accepted, unless we assume that a portion of the islands has become submerged since the formation of the deposit.

The physiological action of meat extracts has recently been the subject of considerable research and experiment among medical men in various parts of Europe, and in every instance which has come under our notice the results indicate that its nutritive value is very small. There can be little doubt that it is worthless as food, in cases of long and severe illness accompanied by great prostration; we have been so assured by one of the most distinguished physicians in New York.

The internal temperature of the human body rises, on exposure of the entire frame unclothed, to a temperature below seventy degrees. The lower the external temperature, down to forty-five degrees, the greater will be this rise; but no rise whatever occurs in an external temperature of seventy degrees. These facts are from a memoir in the *Journal of Anatomy and Physiology*, by Mr. Garrod, who says that they are the results of experiments made upon himself.

In a discussion at a meeting of the Geological Society, a few weeks ago, Dr. W. B. Carpenter, probably the highest authority on the subject of deep-sea dredging, said that the temperature of tropical seas differed so much in proportion to the depth, that below two thousand fathoms the cold was as great as that of high latitudes, and the animals found at these great depths resembled the forms which occur in the shallow circumpolar seas.

An anemometer—from the Greek, *anemos*, the wind, and *metron*, a measure—has been invented, which will register the force and direction of the wind at any distance from the recording vane, by means of an electrical connection. Thus a printing instrument in the office of the signal service at New York could indicate the direction of the wind at Sandy Hook, and its rate of motion, as each might change from time to time.

One of the most interesting facts in modern astronomy is the discovery, which has resulted from a number of observations made within a few years, that Sirius, the famous dog-star of the ancients, and known to every amateur astronomer for its brilliancy and beauty, is gradually receding from the earth. The rate of its motion through stellar space is estimated by Professor Huggins at twenty-six miles per second.

The peculiar napthalic odor which we have become accustomed to regard as characteristic of the now well-known disinfectant, carbolic acid, is said to arise wholly from impurities, being quite foreign to the acid itself. Prof. Church writes to the *Chemical News* that when carbolic acid is perfectly purified it has scarcely any odor, at ordinary temperatures, except a faint perfume resembling the fragrance of geranium leaves.

Wine containing iodine is recommended by a Brussels physician as a beverage for daily use by the workmen in establishments where mercury enters largely into the composition of the articles manufactured, and there is a consequent danger of poisoning by that metal. He believes that this drink, which is by no means unpleasant, will act as an antidote.

An English county magistrate recently refused to permit a scientific lecture on the sun to be delivered in the shire hall, saying that he was afraid the electric light, to be used in the spectrum analysis experiments, might injure the building! Science teaching is evidently needed in that county.

The newly founded Brown Institution for Sick Animals is about to confer a substantial benefit upon the public by a systematic and extended examination and study of the pathology and treatment of pleuro-pneumonia, a disease which annually destroys thousands of cattle.

A fossil human skeleton is said to have been found near Brux, in Bohemia, not long since. It was just over a bed of tertiary coal, about two feet below the surface. Close to it was an ancient stone hammer.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SORROW says: "I come to you for help, and I pray to God that you can give it to me. I am twenty-two years old, and was married when I was seventeen; my life has been as happy as most of married lives. I have always been of a very happy and cheerful disposition, always full of life and fun until within the last six months; without any perceivable cause, I am getting to be so gloomy. I am thinking constantly of death; I am not thinking I am going to die soon, but just that I have got to die. I picture my death-bed and that of my husband and friends constantly. I never see any one but I think, how long will you live. I look about my rooms and wonder where they will lay me when I am dead. If I go to hang a picture, or ornament anything, I think to myself, what is the use? in fifty years from now we will all be dead. When I think of living fifty years yet, it does not seem like anything to me—it seems like a few months. I do not know what to make of it. I am afraid sometimes that I am going out of my mind. My health is perfectly good, so I know my trouble does not come from that. I have not told you a tenth part of my feelings, but I know that it is too much now for your time. I have been used to living in a city, but now am living in a little country town, and am a great deal alone, with the exception of my little child. Do you think that has anything to do with it? although I have never been much of a hand for company. I always used to wonder how people could say they were lonely, for I could always find something to do; but now, no matter what I do, these terrible thoughts rob life of all its brightness. You must excuse me for writing so much, and, oh! do say something to lighten this load, so that I may be able to do my duty by my family. I sometimes pray that I may die, that this dreadful mystery of death may be over with." It is possible that you are too much alone; it is possible that you require judicious medical care; and it is also possible that you require that understanding and belief of the truths of the Bible by which persons are enabled to do their duties, even while well knowing that they must die one day, and may die at any time. Speak to some wise Christian friend who knows you.

HARRY B. (Baltimore) says: "Having been a constant reader of your journal for fourteen years, I am at last compelled to apply to you for advice. I have been waiting upon a lady for some three years past, and will be married this fall, should we both live. Of course, under such circumstances, one would like to be at something permanent and well paying. I am offered a position in one of our courts, which will pay me $1500 per year, while I am making but a thousand at my business, which is a mechanical one. I could very soon decide for myself were it not for one thing; at my business I have the opportunity of rising, while in the other I shall never be anything but a poor devil of a clerk, although it is more congenial to my tastes than the business I am now engaged in. I was in the theatrical profession for some years, but at the solicitation of the aforementioned lady gave it up two years ago and went to the business I am now in, at the time not knowing a thing about it, but am now as near the head as I can get, being employed by one of the first houses in this city. Now, dear sir, you have all the particulars just as I know them; please advise me. Shall I stick at what I am now doing—as I can stay with the same house as long as I live, being sober and steady—or take the, shall I say, political office? Please do not throw this in the waste basket, as your reply is most earnestly and respectfully solicited. I do not mention anything of the love the lady and I have for each other, as she knows it and I know it, and I believe we are the two most concerned." Tell that young lady—of whose judgment and influence over you we have formed a high opinion, with our best wishes for the prosperity of the firm to be set up in the fall—that you had better stick to the business you are in, improve, rise, economize, get a partnership, and be an employer instead of an employé. We know about the love. The question is about the *loaves;* and the business is, we think, the more conducive to self-respect, independence, usefulness, and the good prospects of the future B's in your little hive.

JOHN (New York) says: "I am a young man, about thirty-three years old. I am in business, and manage, by being prudent, to save fifteen hundred dollars a year. I have in bank over two thousand dollars. I give you the above particulars, so as to enable you to answer the question which to me is of great importance, namely, Would it be prudent for me to get married on the above capital? I have a good home, and my mother and sisters do all they can to make me happy, yet I feel as though I ought now, if ever, to get a home of my own. Besides, I have lately become interested in a young lady whom I have known for years, but only lately have thought of her as a wife. She is very fond of dress, and indulges in all the latest styles, and is also fond of the admiration of her gentlemen friends, of whom she has many. These are her only faults, and grave ones I consider them, yet I cannot help loving her. Do you think such a young lady would make a prudent wife, such as a man in my condition ought to have? Will you please give me an answer through the *Ledger*, where we all go when we are troubled?" Many good girls of solid worth have a little weakness for "nice things" to be worn and to be heard. Don't you, and such as you, JOHN, train them to that in some degree? Now, as we do not know this young lady, we cannot say if the weakness is excessive and probably incurable. You must judge of that, though we admit your judging capacity is now "below zero." You should have judged before you began the loving. But there is no reason against your marrying on the ground of means, if you are prudent, and get a like-minded wife.

JOB says: "Will you give us a clear explanation of the petition in the Lord's prayer, namely, 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us?' We are also told that 'if we forgive men their trespasses, our Heavenly Father will forgive us our trespasses. But if we forgive not men, neither will our Father forgive us.' Now I wish to know, above all things, whether this means that we must forgive every outrage and breach of trust which we may suffer under, before we are asked for forgiveness; otherwise our Father *will not forgive us*, and of course we would miss heaven. Secondly, is it in human nature to forgive the traitor who persuaded the wife away whom we loved more than fortune, life, or heaven?" In this petition we beg forgiveness from God, "which we are the more encouraged to ask because by His grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others." See Matthew xviii: 23-35. There are offences which are not only wrongs to us, but to society; and it is not inconsistent with a true prayer for forgiveness to take steps to have the wrong-doer legally punished. As to the second question, it is doubtful if a woman who can be persuaded away deserves to be loved "more than heaven." Allowing for excited language, however, we have only to say that such a criminal is to be punished through the ordinary processes of justice; and a time comes to most men, when—standing near the door into another life, and feeling the need of pardon for themselves—they are willing to forgive the greatest wrong-doers.

ZERBINETTE (city) says: "I am a young lady of seventeen years of age; am engaged to a young gentleman about three years my senior. He loves me devotedly, and I think I fully return his love. A few nights ago we went together to a party. During the evening, through the proposal made by some of the younger persons, we played a game in which there was a great deal of kissing to be done. Now I did not wish to join in what I call so childish a game; but rather than have them think me over-particular, I played, and of course had to kiss some gentlemen. I know my lover was very jealous, although he had the good sense not to say anything about it; he could not keep it from me, as I could see it in his eyes. Now, what I want to know is, if you think he had any *good* reason for being jealous. I am sorry to trouble you with what to you must be so much nonsense; but if you will be kind enough to answer me, you will oblige." There are many varieties of kissing, we presume, and the meaning of the act depends much on the amount of spirit thrown into it. This can only be estimated by a close observer, and we, not having had the opportunity to witness the game, cannot of course form any opinion of the amount of provocation he has received. We propose, for this time, that he lay a fine upon you for the offence, and take it out in kind.

NEVER GIVE UP THE LEDGER (Allegheny) says: "I come to you for advice. I am a young attorney. My business keeps me almost entirely indoors. I am not feeling well—have had the 'blues' for some time past. They say it is all from want of exercise. Now, in the morning, I walk one mile through the country to catch the car to take me to the office, and returning walk the same distance in the evening—altogether walking say about three miles a day, this being all the bodily exercise I take. Walking seems to be the most natural as well as the least expensive exercise. But I await your kind answer as to how many miles I should walk each day, or such other advice as you see fit to offer. What think you of horseback riding, dumb-bells or clubs?" The previous question to the best kind of exercise is, What is the matter with you? Describe your symptoms to a sensible medical man, and be guided by him. Exercise may not be your immediate want.

I. I. I. (Geneva) says: "Will you tell a constant reader of the *Ledger* if book publishers usually buy the manuscript, and publish the book at their own expense and risk, or do authors pay for publishing, and put in market their own works? Also, who is or was Clytie! I read of a 'bust of Clytie,' and though I have many in marble of men of genius and fame, I come to you to expose my ignorance. Oblige me, and believe I am most sincerely your well-wisher." Sometimes they buy out the copyright; sometimes they print and publish at the author's risk; and more frequently they print at their own, giving the author a percentage. Clytie was a water-nymph in love with Apollo, who did not return her love. She was changed into a sunflower, and retains a habit of persons deeply in love, of turning constantly toward the beloved object.

LIZZIE C. S. (Boston) says: "There are two young fellows who persist in calling on me at the most improper times, such as Saturday evening, Sunday afternoon, etc. I have been told that one was infatuated with me, but he never shows any such infatuation, and I am very glad he does not, for I am engaged to some one else. Now I want to know how to get rid of them without making them angry, for they are good fellows, but I dislike them very much." Buy three copies of this *Ledger*, one, of course, to file and keep, the other two to be sent, with a neat pencil mark at this notice, to the young gentlemen, and we engage that they will carry their attentions elsewhere.

J. A. J. (La Grange, Ga.) says: "I wish to know, through your paper, of some good books that will serve for general improvement for a young man." Much depends on your calling and tastes. Every man should know the "best of books." Books of travels, good histories, popular works on science and morals, are of great value to those who seek general intelligence. To be able to give you explicit information, we should know more explicitly your aims.

SUBSCRIBER says: "Would you have the kindness to give me, through the medium of your valuable columns, the title of some good work on Logic, which a beginner might read up on?" There is a good text-book on logic by Dr. McCosh.

SWEET SIXTEEN (Chicago) says: "Being a constant reader of your valuable paper, and observing the good advice and counsel given through its columns to those applying for the same, I have concluded to ask information of you on a subject upon which my few years leave me unenlightened. Being invited to a wedding, I am at a loss to know the usual form of speech used in congratulating the happy pair—how to address it, whether to one or both at the same time, etc. Also, is it customary for any, except family relatives and connections, to present the bride with gifts on such an occasion? By replying to my questions, and making any little suggestions that you may deem necessary on the subject, you will confer a great favor." You may say to one or both, as you think best, "I congratulate you, and wish you all happiness." There is no form, and there should be none. Many besides relatives and connections give wedding gifts. In fact this custom is generally felt to have so extended as to be a nuisance. "It has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished." You ask for any "little suggestions." If you should see fit to accompany your little speech to the bride with a hearty kiss, it will be very nice; and considering your years, even the bridegroom may not object to such "suiting of the action to the word." That is all.

CARRIE (Philadelphia) says: "I have been a reader of your excellent paper for years, and as this is the first time that I have troubled you, I hope you will give your advice upon the following subject: A gentleman has been visiting me for some time, and of whom I think a great deal. A short time since he gave me to understand that he visited me as a friend only. I continued to regard him as such until lately, and now his attentions are becoming so lover-like that I am considerably puzzled how to act. He visits me regularly twice a week, and would bestow more attention upon me if I would allow it. He is a young man who will be in a good business in a year, and will be able to marry then. Now, should I terminate our friendship? Please advise me, as I have no one else to ask, or place such confidence in as the *Ledger*. I hope you will excuse the length of this letter, and please give an answer in the *Ledger* very soon to a most devoted reader." You appear to be a sensible girl. Your best course is to tell him plainly and simply that you cannot receive such marked attentions from any mere "friend." If he means to make an honorable proposal, he cannot but do so; if he does not, the sooner you are free from his mere selfishness the better, as his presence may keep off an honest man.

L. H. R. writes: "Six months ago, while on a visit to a western city, I had the pleasure of meeting a very interesting young lady about the age of seventeen. After one week of acquaintance we parted, exchanged photographs, which were not good, having been taken some time. We both promised to send better ones as soon as we had any taken. I wrote to the young lady, but did not send my picture, as I could not get any taken of the kind that I wished. In answer I received a letter and picture. I wrote again, but did not send my photograph, because of the same reason as before. I told her I would mail one surely next time, as I was going where I could have some good ones taken. I never received an answer to my last letter, and it has been almost five months since I wrote. What would you advise me to do under these circumstances—send my picture yet, or let the matter drop? If I could honorably hold on to the acquaintance of the young lady, I should like very much to do so, for I respect her highly." It may be your last letter was never received; and then, again, it may be the young lady has seen another photograph that she likes better. Before complaining, however, to us, or any one else, you should have made your word good, and sent the promised photograph.

F. B. (Friendship, Md.) says: "The young men of this place have formed a debating society, and, among other questions that have arisen as subjects of debate, has been, Which is the most pleasing to the eye of man—the works of Art, or the works of Nature? Now, sir, a dispute has arisen as to what is a work of Art, and what a work of Nature; and we have decided to appeal to you to define the words Art and Nature. By giving us this information through your Notices to Correspondents, you will oblige a constant reader of your valuable paper." We are practically minded, and never "go on defining," when wiser men "are thinking of dining." So we teach by example. The Yosemite valley, when first discovered, was a pure work of Nature—that is, of God. The pictures of it by Bierstadt are works of Art. Both Nature and Art are combined in some objects. A fine lady, for example, of the French school, of the last century—we make no allusion to the present—with powdered hair, tinted cheeks, colored eyebrows, and padded figure, was a combination in which only the nicest observer—perhaps only her maid—could tell how much was Nature, and how much Art. Cannot you get practical topics for your discussion?

JENNETTE wants to know who or what *Al Borak* was, to which she has sometimes seen references in papers and books which she has read, "but which," she says, "I have never been able to find an explanation of in any dictionary." The phrase is Arabic. *Al* means the, and *borak* (pronounced borrack) is Arabic for lightning; and *Al Borak* is the name of an imaginary animal, of wonderful form and qualities, on which Mohammed pretended to have performed a nocturnal journey from the temple of Mecca to Jerusalem, and thence to the seventh heaven, under the guidance of the angel Gabriel. This marvelous steed was of the feminine gender, of a milk-white color, and of incredible swiftness. At every step, it took a leap as far as the longest sight could reach. It had a human face, but the cheeks of a horse; its eyes were like jacinths, and as radiant as stars. It had eagle's wings all glittering with rays of light; its whole form was resplendent with gems and precious stones. In short, Al Borak was a palfrey which JENNETTE, or any other young lady, would be delighted to own; but she no longer feeds in earthly pastures, but is supposed to browse on the choicest date-trees in the Mohammedan paradise.

CLERGYMAN (New York) says: "What course shall be pursued, what amount of money required, to prepare for the ministry? Is it actually necessary to pursue a college course, or are there professors and select and therefore shorter ways of accomplishing the same end? Young man of twenty-two; fair, although not complete knowledge of Hebrew, Latin and Greek, together with a good American school education, is all that can be boasted of. Have been offered a small fortune by an old lady to take her name, and by that means prepare and enter the pulpit. An explicit answer through your correspondence will oblige an old reader of the *Ledger*." Much depends on the church in which the old lady aspires to have you minister. For churches that require an educated ministry, you have acquired, according to your own account, an amount of knowledge equal to that of a graduate of a college, and would be admissible to the seminary, where a course of three or four years is usually required. You can estimate how much will support you during that time. The amount varies. With most students it takes, as a general rule, about all the money they can get.

YOUNG WIFE (St. Paul) says: "Will you be kind enough to answer one question for me? I am a young married woman. My husband's business requires him to be absent from home most of the time; therefore it is very seldom that he can accompany me to any place of amusement. I was invited to attend a ball with my sister and her escort. My husband gave a ready consent, as he wants me to enjoy myself all I can. But my parents did not think it proper for me to go without my husband, and of course I did not. Now my question is this: Do you think, under the circumstances, it would have been improper for me to have gone? By answering the above you will confer a great favor." If your husband wished you to go, he is to be obeyed. If he simply permitted you to go, as a means of enjoyment to you, and your parents disapproved, it was on the whole perhaps wise to obey your parents. They are disinterested friends, with larger experience and observation than you can have, and as a rule you will lose nothing by deference to their views, even when the rising generation would call them "prejudices."

"LEONORE" is a romantically minded young woman in easy circumstances, with a father in failing health, etc., etc., greatly perplexed, through six pages, to know her duty. She has a most tender feeling for a brilliant young Methodist minister of great, etc., etc., who, she knows, has trifled with the affections of four other girls. We say unhesitatingly, have nothing to do with him! Leave him to his conscience—and the Conference. Then, she is loved devotedly, etc., etc., by a mechanic, of a nature deep, pure, etc., etc., but she does not love him enough to marry him, though she is now engaged to him for the second time, and she tries so hard, with tears, etc., etc., to see her duty. We say also, do not marry him or any one you do not love; tell him the fact, and wait for some one who has the stability, ambition, tastes, congenial feelings, etc., etc.—two pages—which are essential to your happiness. Your mother does not understand you. We do; and feel for your mother. You must cultivate good sense.

J. H. (Decatur, Ill.) says: "Inclosed I send you an 'adv.' clipped from a Harrisburg paper, purporting to be of the 'National Exchange Company,' of New York. Will you please inform me, through your valuable paper, whether there is such a company, and if so, whether it is a responsible firm? also, whether you know the agent? By so doing, you will oblige one of your readers." A long advertisement follows, describing a great gift enterprise. We know nothing of it, and nothing good of the class, and we are not in the way of knowing of the agents of such. The police can probably inform you who and what he is. When we want gold watches and pianos we buy them—and not till we want them—and pay the value of them. We advise J. H. to pursue the same policy. To get either one or the other for any fraction of five dollars, we do not count good trade all round.

J. B. S. (St. Louis) says: "I want you to tell me a few things. My father was in business, and he used my name instead of his, although I was not of age. He failed in business, and I want to know if his creditors can come on me for his debts when I become of age? Some of my friends had an argument with me on the subject; and some said that the creditors can make me pay my father's debts when I become of age. As I have got a few hundreds left, and want to start in business for myself as soon as I become twenty-one, I should like to know what the law is in regard to such a matter." You cannot be held responsible for your father's debts, nor would you be legally responsible even for debts of your own contracted while you were yet a minor; but in honor you would be bound to pay all your debts.

MYRA asks: "Will you please tell me through your paper if A. T. Stewart is a bachelor or a 'family man?'" He is a family man—that is to say, he has a wife. Unfortunately, so far as we know, he has no children; but he is building a large hotel for young women, and we suppose that on the completion of that he will be entitled to be considered a "family man" in reality.

D. T. M. asks: "Is an endorser of a promissory note liable for the amount of the same, who is not notified of the non-payment of the note till it has been due and protested for more than six weeks?" No; an endorser of a promissory note must be notified of its non-payment and protest within three days. A notice left at his place of business is a sufficient notification.

*** *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*